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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the effects of using daily newspapers to supplement normal classroom instruction with at-risk secondary school students. Subjects, 627 at-risk 8th- through 12th-grade students in 41 intact classes, were assigned to one of three conditions of newspaper usage over an 18-week period. The first group received newspapers three times per week and were given related instruction using a whole language approach. The second group received newspapers three times per week without related instruction. The third group served as the control and received no newspaper supplement to normal classroom instruction. Analyses of pretest and posttest scores indicated: (1) students who received newspapers with instruction improved their reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing performance more than students who received newspapers without instruction and students who received no newspapers; (2) secondary school males benefited most from newspaper usage; (3) benefits of newspaper usage increased with time; and (4) 1-day training (which had been given to the teachers of all the students) did not produce uniformly effective classroom use of newspapers among all teachers. (Nine tables of data are included; newspaper and journal articles related to at-risk students, teacher and student questionnaires, and charts of test score data are attached.) (RS)

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF NEWSPAPER-BASED INSTRUCTION ON READING VOCABULARY, READING COMPREHENSION, AND WRITING PERFORMANCE OF AT-RISK MIDDLE AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF NEWSPAPER-BASED INSTRUCTION ON READING VOCABULARY, READING COMPREHENSION, AND WRITING PERFORMANCE OF AT-RISK MIDDLE AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Final Report
submitted to
The Knight Foundation
August, 1989

"The press is the best instrument for enlightening the mind of man, and improving him as a rational, moral and social being."

Thomas Jefferson
1743-1826

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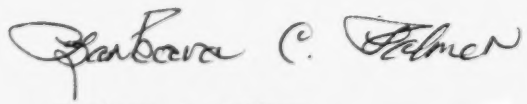

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Abstract

This study examined effects of using daily newspapers to supplement normal classroom instruction with at-risk students in middle and secondary schools. Following a day-long orientation/training seminar, 5 teachers from 4 middle schools taught 12 classes, and 12 teachers from 3 secondary schools taught 29 classes. The 41 intact classes of at-risk students were assigned to three conditions of newspaper usage over an 18-week period: one in which students received newspapers 3 times per week with related instruction using a whole language approach, one in which newspapers were available without related instruction 3 times per week, and a control condition in which no newspapers were used to supplement normal classroom instruction.

Analyses of pretest and posttest scores from 627 students revealed consistently highest improvement in reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing performance for both middle and secondary students who had newspapers with instruction. Less improvement was found for the same measures by students who had newspapers without instruction, but even these improvements were generally more than those of students who had no newspapers.

Other analyses indicate that secondary school males benefit most from newspaper usage, that benefits of newspaper usage increase with time, and that one-day training will not produce uniformly effective classroom use of newspapers among all teachers.

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF NEWSPAPER-BASED INSTRUCTION ON READING VOCABULARY, READING COMPREHENSION, AND WRITING PERFORMANCE OF AT-RISK MIDDLE AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Review of the Literature

Illiteracy is a social and economic disaster that permeates every geographic region, ethnic group, and socioeconomic class in the United States. Americans must not be complacent about illiteracy for it plays a sinister role in stalking the countryside, laying it waste with poverty, unemployment, and crime. Safran (1986) found that 50% of the adults on welfare, 85% of the juvenile delinquents, and 25% of adult prisoners were functionally illiterate.

How many American adults lack the reading and writing abilities needed to handle the minimal demands of daily living?--one in five, a staggering 27 million people. An additional 35 million are only marginally capable of being productive workers. Thirteen percent of high school students graduate with the reading and writing skills of sixth graders. More than one third of all adults have not completed high school.

Aker et al. (1984) presented the following estimation of the illiteracy problem in the United States: one half of the adult population (approximately 50 million) had less

than a high school education. Approximately 25 million had less than an eighth grade education, and about 12.5 million had less than a fifth grade education. The least educated, for example, could not read a newspaper or understand a national newscast.

Kozol (1985) found that 26% of American adults did not know if their paycheck was correct; 44% could not match their skills with a job description in the want ads; 60% could not figure the difference between new and used items in sales advertisements; 22% could not address an envelope well enough for the letter to arrive at its desired destination; and 24% could not put a correct return address on an envelope. O'Donnell (1985) reported that 50% of the managers and supervisors in the work force were unable to write grammatically correct and meaningful paragraphs.

The American work force is suffering as a result of its illiterate employees. With the national debt growing exponentially and foreign markets threatening to take over more domestic markets, the economic world position of the United States is challenged daily. Clearly, the cost of illiterate citizens is enormous. Kozol (1985) stated that "the loss of lifetime earnings for men who do not finish high school compared to those who finish high school is over $200,000. Society pays directly and indirectly for

undereducation through increased welfare costs, work errors, additional training time, accidents, and low productivity. Direct costs of illiteracy to taxpayers and businesses are over $20 billion annually."

Adults who cannot read are unlikely to function as effective citizens in our society. Dezell (1987), of the IBM Corporation, stated before the Congressional Task Force on illiteracy that "the dropout rate in our schools, and our inability to train and retrain (sic) adults to function as productive citizens in our society certainly rank with the federal deficit and the trade imbalance as America's greatest problem." Illiteracy has reached a crisis point in America.

Literacy is more than a skill; it is the ability of a person to understand what he or she has read and apply that knowledge in a social context. Hirsch (1987) suggested that there are two kinds of illiterates in America--functional illiterates and cultural illiterates. Functional illiterates are those persons whose inability to read or write prevents them from communicating in these media. They read at the fourth grade reading level, or less. Such people, for example, have difficulty filling out job applications or passing written driver's examinations. Cultural illiterates can read words on a printed page correctly but have little understanding of the meaning or

the proper context of the words. These people are able to call words but lack the vocabulary knowledge and background experiences to internalize their meaning.

Cultural illiteracy may best be addressed through the use of a medium that exposes students to real-life situations and experiences. Both functional illiteracy and cultural illiteracy must be addressed in any program designed to reduce illiteracy in America.

Chall (1983) has noted that world knowledge is essential in the development of reading and writing skills. Chall's concept of world knowledge is closely related to Hirsch's concept of cultural literacy. Hirsch suggests that the "achievement of high universal literacy is the key to all other fundamental improvements in American education."

However, verbal skills of Americans, as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and by the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), have declined in the last fifteen years. Some educators have argued that the decline in scores was due to a larger number of disadvantaged and minority students taking the test. However, an analysis of sub-group scores has shown that scores of even the most advanced and academically talented groups have declined, also.

Hirsch (1987) argues that the amount of shared knowledge, that pool of information with which most educated citizens in a society are familiar, has been declining since 1970. The NAEP conducted a study among 17-year-olds to determine their familiarity with shared knowledge. Hirsch studied the results and found students have much less shared knowledge today than they had fifteen years ago. For example, two thirds of the 17-year-olds did not know the Civil War took place between 1850 and 1900. Three fourths did not know the meaning of reconstruction. The results of the NAEP study are embarrassing for a country that is a leader in the modern world. One can see the necessity for designing and implementing instruction in the communication processes of reading and writing in conjunction with specific knowledge and real-life situations.

If citizens are to participate fully in society, they must be educated beyond a functional level of literacy. As contributing citizens and successful communicators, they will use appropriate vocabulary, comprehend and write messages, continually expand their cultural knowledge, think critically, problem-solve creatively, and monitor their own learning. These factors involved in literacy are defined narrowly as follows:

Vocabulary - those words known or used by a person or group. If readers do not have the appropriate or necessary terms in their vocabulary, comprehension will suffer.

Comprehension - the process of getting the meaning from communications as well as the knowledge or understanding that is the result of such a process. More specifically, reading comprehension includes (1) getting the literal meaning, (2) developing the interpretive or suggested meaning, (3) evaluating what is read in a critical way, and (4) reacting to what is read in a creative, intuitive way.

Writing Performance - the process of putting words together to form an effective written message. The composing/writing process involves several steps--generating, planning, translating, and editing. Writing is a way of thinking with written words.

Cultural Knowledge (background information) - the sum total of a person's previous learning, development, and experience. "It is the background information, stored in their (people's) minds, that enables them to take up a newspaper and read it with an adequate level of comprehension, getting the point, grasping the implications, relating what they read to the unstated context which alone gives meaning to what they read" (Hirsch, 1987).

Critical and Creative Thinking Ability and Metacognitive Learning Strategies - those principles and processes used in thought, cognition, and learning that enable a person to get meaning from a communication. Cognition is characterized by remembering, comprehending, focusing attention, and processing information. Cognition precedes metacognition. Metacognition is knowing about what one knows or thinking critically about those things one knows. Readers who are metacognitively aware, for example, know what they know and do not know and know which strategies to apply to increase their reading comprehension. The application of metacognitive learning strategies has been found to be highly correlated with achievement indices (Zimmerman, 1988). No adult can reach full potential as a contributing citizen or cope well in a rapidly changing society without these skills.

The At-Risk Student

Students at risk in American schools is a multi-faceted problem stemming from many causes: personal, family, school, societal, and economic. At-risk students are leaving schools at an overwhelming rate of 27% nationally. Of those dropouts, 67% are functionally illiterate. Mizereck (1987) reported a statement by Mary Futrell, Past President of the National Education Association, that over one million students drop out of school each year, an additional 300,000 are chronically truant, and one third of America's 40 million

public school students are on the brink of becoming at-risk students.

A major problem in identifying at-risk students in American high schools is that no standardized definition of the at-risk student exists across school districts or state lines. School systems do not identify dropouts in the same way nor do they define them uniformly. An illustration of this is seen in whether a system reports an annual or a four-year dropout statistic for a graduating class. If 10% of a class leaves school each year, some systems report a dropout rate of 10%. Others report a figure indicating the cumulative effect of a 10% loss over four years. At the end of the twelfth grade, a class losing 10% of its population annually would graduate only 65.6% of the students with which it began. While one system might report this as a 10% dropout rate, another might report it as a 35% dropout rate. Obviously, the dropout rate is even more serious than we think.

The at-risk student is one who is in danger of becoming a dropout, yet no clear definition of a dropout exists. The U.S. General Accounting Office uses the definition of the Current Population Survey to define a dropout: "Persons neither enrolled in schools nor high school graduates." The Florida Statute defines a dropout as a "student who leaves school for any reason except death

before graduation or completion of a program of studies and without transferring to another public or private school or other educational institution" (Section 228.041 F.S). In Chicago, a category coding system is used to identify students leaving high school prior to graduation. One of the 19 categories is "dropout," while others include "married," "cannot adjust," or "needed at home." As a result of this system of reporting, only a small percentage of Chicago students leaving school are considered to be statistical dropouts (Hahn, 1987). Therefore, the Chicago Board of Education developed a multiyear tracking system and determined a more accurate dropout rate of 50.7%.

During 1988 Phi Delta Kappa conducted a national research study to examine four questions: (1) Who is the at-risk student? (2) What are at-risk students like? (3) How can schools help at-risk students? and (4) How effective are school programs with at-risk students? This study is being replicated in 100 chapters across the United States. While the findings of this study are not yet available, its definition of the dropout is useful. For the first time, uniform reporting of dropout and at-risk data will be available throughout the United States, using the Holding Power Statistic.

$$\text{HOLDING POWER STATISTIC} = \frac{\text{1988 graduates + early graduates + those still in school in the graduating class}}{\text{number of new 9th graders (transfers + jail + dead) in 1984}}$$

Ehren et al. (1986) suggests that because the size and nature of the at-risk population have been misrepresented due to inadequate definition, confusion has resulted in designing appropriate prevention programs.

Profile of the At-Risk Student

Two major studies in the 1980s have been conducted in the State of Florida to determine a profile of the at-risk student. In both studies, factors were identified that can help educators predict potentially at-risk students as early as elementary school. If educators respond to these students early in the school experience through intervention and appropriate instruction, a reduction in the dropout rate may be achieved.

The University of Miami Dropout Prevention Center, along with recommendations made by Dr. Nancy Peck, identified three areas to be examined: school related factors, family factors, and personal factors. The following list of dropout indicators represents a composite profile reported to the Florida Department of Education in 1987.

School Related Factors:

- absenteeism/truancy/frequent tardiness
- poor grades
- discrepancy between ability and performance

- math and reading level not commensurate with grade level
- verbal deficiencies
- inability to tolerate structured activities
- lack of definitive educational goals
- feeling of alienation from school
- failure to see the relevance of education to life experiences
- limited extra-curricular involvement
- retention in one or more grades
- disruptive classroom behavior

Family Factors:

- tendency to come from low income families
- poor communication between home and school
- siblings or parents who are dropouts
- low educational level of parents
- excessively stressful home environment
- limited parental monitoring of student's activity
- lower parental expectations
- dysfunctional family
- fewer study aids available in the home

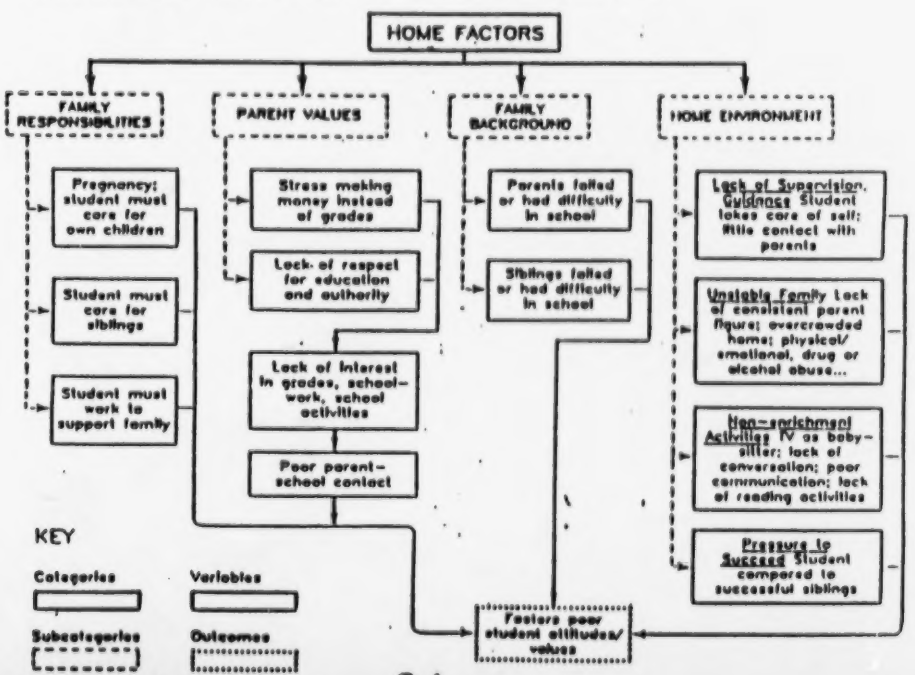
Personal Factors:

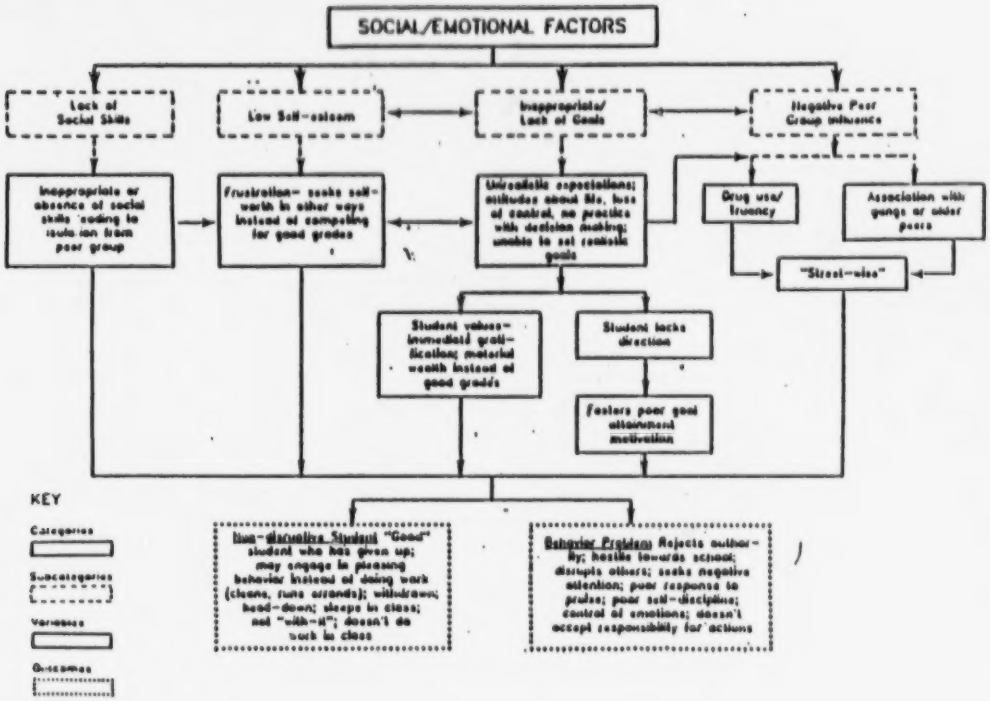
- inability to identify with peer group
- friends all outside of school
- poor social adjustment
- difficulty relating to authority figures

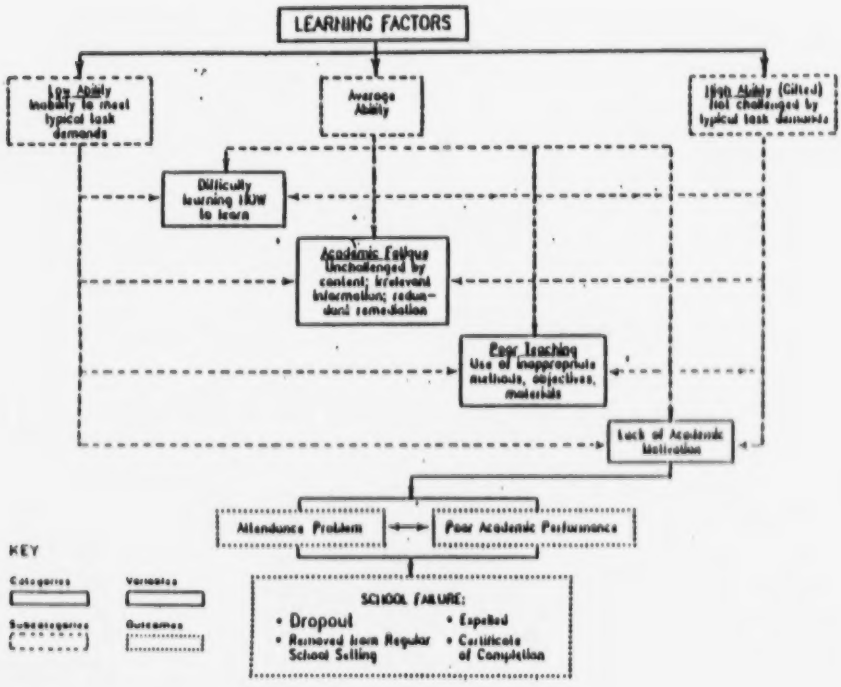
- disruptive behavior and rebellious attitudes toward authority
- frequent health problems
- experience of some form of emotional trauma
- poor self concept
- more hours per week spent on job
- responsibility of raising one or more children

The Florida Atlantic University Florida Dropout Identification System (1986) also identified three variables for predicting potentially at-risk students: home factors, social/emotional factors, and learning factors. These factors contributed to poor student attitudes and values toward school, behavior problems, attendance problems, and poor academic performance. Together they provide valuable insight into the potentially at-risk student (Ehren, Lenz, & Swanson, 1986).

Variables Related to School Failure:


HOME FACTORS
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES
PARENT VALUES
FAMILY BACKGROUND
HOME ENVIRONMENT
Pregnancy; student must care for own children
Student must care for siblings
Student must work to support family
Stress making money instead of grades
Lack of respect for education and authority
Lack of interest in grades, school-work, school activities
Poor parent-school contact
Parents failed or had difficulty in school
Siblings failed or had difficulty in school
Lack of Supervision, Guidance Student takes care of self; little contact with parents
Unstable family Lack of consistent parent figure; overcrowded home; physical/ emotional, drug or alcohol abuse...
Non-enrichment Activities TV as baby-sitter; lack of conversation; poor communication; lack of reading activities
Pressure to Succeed Student compared to successful siblings
Fosters poor student attitudes/ values
KEY
Categories
Variables
Subcategories
Outcomes


SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL FACTORS
Lack of Social Skills
Low Self-esteem
Inappropriate/ Lack of Goals
Negative Peer Group influence
Inappropriate or absence of social skills leading to isolation from peer group
Frustration- seeks self-worth in other ways instead of competing for good grades
Unrealistic expectations; attitudes about life, loss of control, no practice with decision making; unable to set realistic goals
Drug use/ truancy
Association with gangs or older peers
"Street-wise"
Student values- immediate gratification; material wealth instead of good grades
Student lacks direction
Fosters poor goal attainment motivation
KEY
Categories
Subcategories
Variables
Outcomes
Non-disruptive Student "Good" student who has given up; may engage in pleasing behavior instead of doing work (cleans, runs errands); withdrawn; head-down; sleeps in class; not "with-it"; doesn't do work in class
Behavior Problem Rejects authority; hostile towards school; disrupts others; seeks negative attention; poor response to praise; poor self-discipline; control of emotions; doesn't accept responsibility for actions


LEARNING FACTORS
Low Ability Inability to meet typical task demands
Average Ability
High Ability (Gifted) Not challenged by typical task demands
Difficulty learning HOW to learn
Academic Failure Unchallenged by content; irrelevant information; redundant remediation
Poor Teaching Use of inappropriate methods, objectives, materials
Lack of Academic Motivation
Attendance Problem
Poor Academic Performance
KEY
Categories
Variables
Subcategories
Outcomes
SCHOOL FAILURE:
• Dropout
• Removed from Regular School Setting
• Expelled
• Certificate of Completion

At-risk students are a societal problem, as well as a school problem. Most dropouts come from the economically disadvantaged and minority groups. What do the dropouts cost society? The Stanford Education Policy Institute estimated that high school dropouts cost $278 billion a year in unemployment, welfare, law enforcement, and other social costs. It is estimated that by the turn of the century, dropouts will be 60% less likely to be employed than high school graduates (FLOIS, 1988).

In the High School and Beyond Study of dropouts aged 16-24, Hahn (1987) found that socioeconomic status was a key factor with at-risk students. Seventeen percent of the respondents were from disadvantaged socioeconomic status (SES) families, while only 5% of the students were from advantaged families. Numerous studies have shown that the dropout rate is highest in schools with a large minority population combined with students who generally come from low income families. Hahn also found differences by regions of the United States: the Southwest (21% dropout rate), Northeast (18%), Southeast (11%), Northwest (9%). He also found that the dropout rate was twice as high in large cities as in small cities (25% to 13%). Ironically, the "excellence movement" in education which raises standards for graduation also contributes to the dropout rate.

Hahn identified 10 risk factors that he considered to be most important predictors of who will drop out of school:

1. being behind in grade level and being older than other classmates. "The good reader who is over age is more likely to drop out than the poor reader who is the proper age for his or her class" (Hahn, 1987). School retention may harm self-worth more than the academic benefits that accompany it.
2. poor academic achievement and performance
3. dislike of school or fear for their safety in school
4. detention and suspension. The Children's Defense Fund found that 25% of dropouts had been suspended before actually dropping out.
5. pregnancy. Eighty percent of pregnant females drop out of school. Only 10% of non-pregnant females drop out.
6. welfare recipients and members of single parent households
7. attractiveness of work. Males, in particular, hope that the world of work will provide success where school has not.
8. attraction of military service. One third of military enlistees are dropouts.
9. undiagnosed learning disabilities and emotional problems

10. language difficulties. Students whose primary language is not English find this affects their academic success.

For the at-risk high school student, the above factors are especially important.

Keeping the At-Risk Student in School

Because having a large number of dropouts has a negative impact on the entire society, dropout prevention has become an emphasis in every aspect of American society--education, business, and government. High school dropouts have higher rates of unemployment, are more likely to be incarcerated, are more likely to be on public assistance and welfare programs, and earn substantially less income in a lifetime than do high school graduates. Peck et al. (1987) states that a year in jail costs three times more than a year in college.

Leaving high school early creates bigger problems for the students than expected. Most studies recommend an eclectic approach to help make schools a more attractive alternative for at-risk students. Implementing remedial instruction and providing social services are not enough to effect change. Hahn identified the following eight essential components for reform in high schools to keep at-risk students from becoming dropouts:

1. mentorships and intensive, sustained counseling for troubled youngsters

2. an array of social services, including health care, family planning education, and infant care facilities for adolescent mothers
3. concentrated remediation using individualized instruction and competency-based curricula
4. an effective school/business collaboration that provides ongoing access to the mainstream economy
5. improved incentives, including financial rewards, for completing high school
6. year-round schools and alternative schools
7. heightened accountability for dropout rates at all levels of the system of public education
8. involvement of parents and community organizations in dropout prevention (Hahn, 1987)

According to Peck, collaboration among schools, parents, community agencies, businesses, and institutions of higher education is essential. Her handbook provides a list of 30 strategies for establishing linkages among the various agencies and 29 strategies for parental involvement (Peck et al., 1987).

The Center for Dropout Prevention at the University of Miami has developed a handbook, Project Success, to assist schools with the at-risk population (Shapley et al., 1988). Practical, hands-on strategies and insights are provided for school personnel to revitalize existing programs

to meet the needs of this special population. Teachers are called on to show genuine care for these students by learning of their needs, cultural and family backgrounds, and interests. They are also encouraged to experiment with innovative climates of learning which relate the instruction in the classroom to the everyday world of the students. Newspapers are one important vehicle for accomplishing this goal.

Beacham (1988) conducted a study in Leon County, Florida, to find innovative ways of helping at-risk students graduate from high school. He studied 166 at-risk students and 116 dropouts. The at-risk students suggested five areas in which schools needed improvement. The dropout students identified four of the same criteria (#1, 2, 3, 5). These areas were as follows: (1) change the general school policies and regulations, (2) change ways school faculties and staff relate to the students, (3) change the nature and number of curriculum offerings, (4) change testing and grading methods, and (5) change the guidance and counseling services.

Pressures out of school strongly affect the ways students learn in school. Teachers need to show they understand these forces. This is easier in classrooms with smaller student/teacher ratios. Hodgkinson (1985) found that the teacher/student ratio was correlated with dropout rates, while teachers' salaries and per-pupil expenditures were not.

Hahn (1987) reported that "where dropout rates are concerned, expenditures are less important than a school's organization, the quality of its teaching and administration, and its innovations in curriculum."

Monohan (1988), President of the Florida Reading Association, suggested that schools need to teach at-risk students how to work "smarter." This entails more than the skills of deciphering words; it involves learning how to read to learn. Schools need programs that will change the lives of students. Also necessary are high-technological programs that integrate the world of school and the world of work. Self-image and achievement need to be stressed, particularly through the vehicle of reading.

One example of a high-technological program is Martin's Principle of the Alphabet Literacy System (PALS), developed to teach reading skills to adults. For piloting the program in 1983, Martin selected an inner city high school in Washington, D.C., and randomly chose a class of 24 students from a list of the school's lowest 10% of readers, ranging in age from 16 to 19, with average reading scores of third to fourth grade, and with an attendance record of less than 50%. Following a 20-week treatment period, students had a 27.7-month improvement in reading scores and had a 90% attendance record. A follow-up study three years later

showed that 16 of these students had graduated from high school, 3 were seniors, and 8 of the graduates had entered college (Dezell, 1987).

Research Related to the Impact of Newspaper-Based Instruction on Reading Achievement and Writing Performance

The literature related to newspaper-based instruction reviewed fell into five categories:

1. student competency in reading newspapers
2. student attitudes toward reading
3. student reading achievement
4. student writing performance
5. student competency in critical thinking

The Use of Newspapers and Student Competency in Reading Newspapers

Educational Testing Service (ETS) developed a Newspaper Reading Test for the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation (ANPA) to assess student competency in reading

newspapers. The ANPA wanted to determine the extent to which student skills in reading and understanding the newspaper could be improved through the use of the newspaper in the classroom. In a review of research studies conducted using the Newspaper Reading Test, DeRoche and Skover (1983) found that newspaper usage in classrooms tended to improve students' newspaper reading competencies. Of particular interest to the present study are the following two studies conducted in secondary schools.

Diederich (1971) conducted the first research study using the Newspaper Reading Test with seventh through twelfth grade students. Using existing classes, he divided them according to those classes using newspapers in regular classroom instruction and those not using them. The experimental group of students using the newspaper in daily instruction had 13% more students scoring above the national norm on the test than did the control group of students. Diederich concluded that differences this large are not generally found in reading improvement programs, especially in grades seven through twelve.

Avery (1973) randomly assigned two groups of 76 ninth grade American History students to experimental and control groups. Pretests, using the Newspaper Reading Test, showed no differences between the two groups in their newspaper

reading competency. The experimental group received newspaper instruction twenty minutes a day for three and one half weeks. The experimental group performed better than the control group on the posttest of the Newspaper Reading Test. From these results, Avery concluded that these students learned to use the newspaper more effectively in just three and one half weeks.

While studies such as these have shown that the use of newspapers improves the ability of students to read the newspaper, the question must be asked if there is a spin-off effect on student attitudes toward reading and on reading achievement as measured by standardized reading tests.

The Use of Newspapers and Student Attitudes Toward Reading

Much literature concerning ideas and techniques for using the newspaper in the classroom is available. Research related to newspaper use and the effects of newspapers on student and teacher attitudes is more limited. DeRoche (1981) studied the attitudes of teachers using newspapers in their classes. He found that teachers who received training in the use of newspapers and then implemented their use had better attitudes toward this activity than did teachers who did not receive training. This training influenced positively their attitudes about (1) the quality of news coverage, (2) the editorial views of local newspapers, (3) the newspaper as a teaching tool, and (4) acceptance of all of the mass media.

According to studies by Geyer (1977) and Verner and Murphy (1977), students developed positive attitudes toward newspapers when used in the classroom. These two studies revealed that the use of newspapers in the classroom increased student interest in reading and current affairs as well as the students' desire to learn subject matter. The greatest positive change was found in students' attitudes toward their city.

Three studies that measured the impact of newspaper use on student attitudes toward reading in general follow: In examining students with a disinterest in reading, Drake (1968) wanted to know whether the use of newspapers or conventional textbooks would stimulate more positive attitudes. He studied 80 high school students, 42% of whom were on probation or parole. The two experimental groups, those exposed to newspapers, had a mean gain score of 1.1 and 0.9 compared to 0.6 for the control group. Interestingly, teachers reported that attendance for the two experimental groups was improved.

Dewell (1980) conducted a study to determine whether the appropriate use of newspapers in the classroom would positively affect students' attitudes toward reading. Her sample included 3,021 students in six elementary schools, two junior high schools, and two senior high schools. After

receiving training in using newspapers as supplements to classroom textbooks, the teachers of the experimental groups applied the treatment for a period of one semester. Dewell found that sex and socioeconomic background were important factors in reading motivation and attitude. Using the Estes Attitude Scale for Reading, significant differences in attitudes toward reading were recorded in favor of the experimental groups overall, as well as in the following three subgroups: elementary school girls, secondary school boys, and lower middle-class elementary students.

In a study of 413 fifth graders and 379 eleventh and twelfth graders, Anderson (1982) compared three groups of matched students to determine if the amount of newspaper use in the schools had an impact on students' newspaper reading habits and attitudes and on their awareness of and interest in social and political issues. One group received consistent newspaper exposure throughout the school year, one received infrequent newspaper exposure, and one received no exposure to newspapers in the classroom. The group receiving the systematic newspaper exposure throughout the school year showed more positive changes in newspaper reading habits, in their attitudes toward newspapers, and in their interest in and knowledge of current events, than did the groups not receiving systematic exposure to newspapers.

These studies demonstrated that newspapers, when used in conjunction with textbooks, can have a positive effect on student attitudes toward reading. Since Drake's 1968 study dealt with students exhibiting the characteristics of potential high school dropouts, it is of particular importance to the present pilot study.

The Use of Newspapers and Student Reading Achievement

The use of newspapers in the classroom has been shown to increase student ability and desire to read newspapers. In addition, students develop more positive attitudes toward reading the newspaper and toward reading in general when exposed to newspapers. Numerous studies have been conducted to examine the effect of newspaper usage on vocabulary development and reading comprehension.

Reading scores have improved in classrooms where newspapers are regularly used. Two studies of particular importance were conducted with disadvantaged and minority students. In each case, significant increases in reading competencies were found in the groups using newspapers in the classroom (Berryman, 1971, & Rochester Newspapers, 1971).

Riggs (1972) conducted a Title I reading study with 300 predominantly minority seventh and eighth grade students. Using the Nelson Reading Test for pre- and posttesting, she found that her students achieved consistently

well when compared to the state norms. The mean gain score for seventh graders was 2.37 and for eighth graders, 2.12. The statewide averages were 0.4 and 0.7, respectively.

Wardell (1973) conducted a study with 300 students to monitor their specific skills in reading a newspaper. She found improvement in the following areas: (1) overall reading ability, (2) the ability to distinguish fact from opinion, and (3) the ability to distinguish major and minor news details. Two groups of students benefitted most from newspaper use--those with superior intelligence from lower socioeconomic families and those with lower intelligence from higher socioeconomic families.

Rowe (1977) wanted to determine if students who received daily exposure to and supplementary instruction with the newspaper in the classroom would outperform nonexposed students of matched ability levels on tests of basic reading skills. Forty students were selected from two low-level tenth grade English classes. One of the two classes was exposed to the newspaper while the other class used conventional texts with no supplemental use of the newspaper. The study, conducted over an academic school year, found that students in the group exposed to newspapers scored significantly higher on the ANPA Foundation Newspaper Reading Test. It was also noted through teacher observation that students' interest and motivation increased through the use of the newspaper.

DeRoche (1981 and 1983) found that newspapers were a valuable and useful tool in helping students develop general reading skills, positive attitudes toward reading in general, and reading newspapers specifically. Seely (1980) found that a combined newspaper/textbook approach teaches reading comprehension skills better than the use of a textbook alone. Sixth grade students of average and above-average intelligence gained significantly in reading comprehension during a 7-month period of newspaper/textbook exposure when compared to a control group receiving no newspaper use in the school.

DeRoche (1981) reported that 350 different U.S. newspapers were participating in Newspaper in Education (NIE) projects, distributing 44.6 million newspapers a year to schools. Twenty percent of American schools, 5% of the teachers, and 10% of the students were using newspapers in the classroom each year. The stated objectives of the Newspaper in Education project included the following: (1) to provide newspapers to schools as resource material and to improve classroom teaching techniques for using newspapers, (2) to teach the critical and effective use of newspapers and instill a positive regard for a free press, (3) to increase student knowledge of current events, and (4) to develop reading habits that students will carry into adult life.

To check on these NIE objectives, Stone (1988) reviewed research studies measuring differences between students using newspapers in schools and those not using them. In the following areas, he found that students using newspapers showed more positive effects than those students not using them:

1. enjoyment of reading newspapers
2. ease of reading newspapers
3. likelihood of reading newspapers
4. likelihood of reading "hard" news as opposed to comics or sports news
5. awareness of public issues
6. political consciousness

Stone's review also indicated that newspaper use in the schools supplied a valuable opportunity for students who did not have newspaper exposure at home.

Since home exposure to newspapers has been steadily declining in the last decade, the use of newspapers in the schools will become even more important in the future. In fact, a higher percentage of potential dropouts may come from families that do not have the newspaper in the home, making the impact of newspaper usage even greater on this population.

Gillis (1984) studied 77 seventh grade students to see if newspaper use would positively increase reading and language arts skills as measured by the Metropolitan Achievement Test. Students were randomly assigned to two experimental groups and one control group for two consecutive 12-week treatment periods. A significant difference was found between groups in favor of the experimental groups in reading comprehension, while a significant difference between groups in favor of the control group was found in the language arts subtests measuring usage, spelling, and study skills.

A study by Poindexter (1986) combined elements of the foregoing studies. Seventy teachers were trained in a 2-day, 6-hour training session on effective and creative teaching techniques for using the Los Angeles Times in their classroom. In addition, they were given curriculum materials to assist them in using the newspaper in their classes. Following a 10-week pilot program, a 25-item questionnaire was given to fifth through twelfth grade students in the experimental and control groups. The test items measured reading comprehension, knowledge of people and places in the news, vocabulary in the news, and general vocabulary. A significant difference was found between fifth and sixth grade students in favor of the experimental groups in all categories of the test. In

addition to the test, teachers were asked to speculate on differences in student attitudes and skills after using the newspaper for 10 weeks. Eighty-four percent of the teachers said that student interest in reading was increased, 76% noted improvement in vocabulary development, and 68% found that critical reading skills were better. A longer treatment period may be required for a significant difference to show among seventh to twelfth graders.

The Use of Newspapers and Student Writing Performance

A thorough review of the research literature related to the impact of newspaper-based instruction on writing performance revealed no studies.

The Use of Newspapers and Student Competency in Critical Thinking

Two studies conducted by Verner and Willis (1977) and Norman (1978) measured the verbal development of students facilitated by the use of newspapers. Students in both studies engaged in more meaningful discussion and asked better questions as a result of newspaper use. This indicates that newspaper use can influence positively the development of critical thinking in students.

Sullivan (1986) conducted a review of research on building literacy skills using the newspaper. While she primarily focused on typography, readability, newspaper design, and habits of readers, the following studies on cognitive spinoffs from reading the newspaper are of particular interest to this study.

In a series of studies, Thorndyke (1979) investigated the relationship between readers' free recall and average reading time for a news story written in an original narrative form and in a condensed version. He found that readers of the condensed version had more accurate recall and read more slowly. In a follow-up experiment, Thorndyke tried to determine whether the reader has a single schema for organizing the information in news stories. Two news stories were presented, both in a condensed version and in a narrative chronological order. For a story on Iraq, free recall scores were better for the narrative structure--33% compared to 23% for the narrative chronological order. However, for the story, "The Release of Carillo," which did not utilize a specific chronological organization, free recall scores were higher for the condensed structure--27% to 19%. Thorndyke concluded that "no single organization of information was optimal for all stories." It is reasonable to conclude that "people have available a set of schemata for text organization that can be used as the content of the (written) text dictates."

VanDijk (1983) postulated that readers have "cognitive control systems" that regulate the flow of information between short-term and long-term memory. In reading news stories, the reader's decision to read or not read is made by messages sent to the brain, alerted by the headlines, the lead, and any first thematic sentences. These messages activate knowledge from one's memory which in turn regulates the comprehension of the text. The headlines, the lead, and thematic sentences serve as a "higher level category" of summary and introduction. Van Dijk proposed a 3-leveled structure for discussing news in the classroom: (1) summary and introduction, (2) episodes, and (3) comments.

These studies by Thorndyke and Van Dijk suggest that as teachers and students learn to recognize the schematic structure of a news story, as well as the cognitive control systems operating, reading comprehension and recall are improved. As teachers learn ways to help students internalize their newspaper readings into their intellectual schemata, they will better help their students develop critical thinking skills and utilize them as they read newspapers.

Conclusion

If optimal learning is to take place in the schools, the effective use of newspapers in the classroom must be addressed by educators and newspaper personnel. After conducting

two reviews of research on the impact of newspapers in the public schools, DeRoche (1981, 1983) concluded the following:

1. Daily newspapers are a valuable instructional tool.
2. Daily newspapers are a useful aid in helping young and adult learners master the skills of reading.
3. Using newspapers on a regular basis in classrooms improves the reading interests and habits of learners.
4. Newspaper use seems to influence classroom verbal interactions, student motivation, school attendance, and student behavior.
5. Using newspapers for the teaching and learning of reading has residual effects; that is, while students are mastering the skills of reading, they are also increasing their interest and knowledge of world affairs (DeRoche & Skover, 1983).

The research evidence revealed in this review clearly indicates that the use of newspapers in the schools has a positive effect on student attitudes toward reading in general, student attitudes toward reading the newspapers, student competency in reading the newspaper, the improvement of reading achievement, and student competency in critical thinking. No studies were found that related newspaper-based instruction to writing performance.

Only three studies were found that related to student populations similar to the at-risk students being examined in this present study. Given that at-risk students bring with them a special set of problems, research with this population should be continued as strategies are designed for increasing the probability of these students completing a high school education, thus becoming more effective citizens in our society.

Research Question

To what extent does newspaper-based instruction improve reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing performance of at-risk middle and secondary school students? That was the primary research question addressed in this project. The following corollary question was also addressed: Are there any differential effects of the newspaper-based instruction on at-risk population dropout rates?

Method

Teachers

Seventeen experienced teachers from the local county public school system volunteered to participate in this study. On July 26, 1988, they attended a day-long orientation/training seminar for the project (Appendix C). Following the seminar, each teacher completed a questionnaire that elicited information about his/her educational background/ highest degree(s), number of years' teaching experience, previous training in the use of newspapers in the classroom, use of newspapers in the classroom prior to the study, previous training in writing, and interest in touring the facility and meeting with editors/reporters at the Tallahassee Democrat. Tables showing their responses appear in Appendix D. Five teachers, from 4 middle schools, subsequently taught 12 eighth grade classes; and 12 teachers, from 3 secondary schools, taught 29 classes of ninth through twelfth grades.

Table 1

Distribution of Teachers and Treatment Classes

	School	Number of Teachers	Treatment Classes Active	Passive	Control
Middle Schools	#1	2	1	2	2
	#2	1	1	1	0
	#3	1	1	1	1
	#4	1	1	0	1
	n =	5	4	4	4
Secondary Schools	#1	5	6	6	3
	#2	4	3	3	1
	#3	3	2	2	3
	n =	12	11	11	7
TOTAL	N =	17	15	15	11

Students

In September, 1988, 856 students (340 eighth graders and 516 ninth through twelfth graders) from classes taught by the trained teachers were given pretests, and each completed a demographic questionnaire (Appendix E). Because of absenteeism, mobility, scheduling changes, and failure to take both pretest and posttest, the data from only 627 students were usable.

Procedure

Pretests in vocabulary and reading comprehension were administered during the week of September 6-9, 1988, using Science Research Associates Achievement Series, Level E, Form 1, for the middle schools and Level F, Form 1 for the secondary schools. To measure gains in writing performance, three writing samples were taken and analyzed. The first writing sample was taken during the week of October 17-21, 1988, with the second and third taken during the weeks of January 30-February 3 and April 3-7, 1989. Writing sample topics were selected from The Official GED Practice Tests and The Official Teacher's Guide to the Tests of General Educational Development with the permission of Dr. Douglas R. Whitney, Director, GED Testing Service, Washington, D.C. (Appendix F). All essay samples were scored at the Florida Department of Education's GED Essay

Scoring Center in accordance with the provisions required for state-administered GED testing programs; i.e., holistically, computer processed, and graded without bias (Appendix F).

Posttests in vocabulary and reading comprehension were administered during the week of April 11-20, 1989, using Science Research Associates Achievement Series Level E, Form 2, for the middle schools and Level F, Form 2, for the secondary schools.

The major daily newspaper was delivered three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) for a total of 55 deliveries, from October 17, 1988, through March 24, 1989.

Treatments

Intact classes were assigned to the following three conditions of newspaper usage:

1. Newspapers with instruction (Active).

   Students received newspapers and related instruction in their use for three 50-minute periods each week. The teacher used a whole language approach (Appendix B) for relating the newspaper-based instruction to the everyday world of the students. This condition should lead to the highest gains in reading and writing test scores because the newspaper provides high-interest, real-life content that students want to read; and the

instructional approach emphasizes the integration of reading and writing.

2. Newspapers without instruction (Passive).

   Students had access to newspapers for the same three periods each week, but they had no instruction regarding their use; the newspapers were provided merely along with other instructional materials. If newspapers are familiar and intrinsically interesting, then gains are also expected under this condition although not so large as gains under the first condition.

3. Newspapers not used (Control).

   Students received neither newspapers nor newspaper-related instruction. They used traditional materials. Any gain under this condition should reflect differences in posttest difficulty, learning following normal instruction, or changed motivation of students. Thus, this control condition provides the baseline against which to compare gains using newspapers in classrooms.

Within the restraints imposed by normal class scheduling, every effort was made to balance classes, teachers, class meeting times, and class sizes across the three treatment conditions.

Results and Discussion

Preliminary examination of gain scores (from pretest to posttest) revealed some unusually high and low scores. A decision was made to delete as extreme, or deviant, all gain scores that were above or below 3 standard deviations from the group mean.

Initial examination of mean gains by teacher also made it clear that all teachers were not equally effective in using newspaper-based instruction. Some showed little or no gains for their classes. Recall that these teachers had only a day-long orientation/training seminar for the project (Appendix C), and there was only limited monitoring to assure that the teachers were in fact utilizing the newspaper as recommended. In addition to the teachers reporting a range of 2-29 years' teaching experience, only 9 of the 17 teachers reported previous training in the use of newspapers (Appendix D). Also, the teachers' experience in using newspapers in the classroom varied, with only 1 of the 5 middle school teachers and 8 secondary school teachers reporting use of newspapers in the classroom prior to this study. However, of the 17 teachers, 12 reported previous training in writing. The reader is cautioned, therefore, that reported average scores of all students

include the effects of teachers who varied considerable in their ability to use newspapers effectively in the classroom.

The primary results are given in Table 2 as percentage improvement, or gain, from pretest to posttest. As expected, the largest improvements in all tests for all students occurred under the condition of newspapers with instruction; eighth graders improving about 8% over all tests and secondary school students averaging about 11% improvement over all tests. Smaller gains--about 3% for eighth graders and about 6% for secondary school students over all tests--occurred under newspapers without instruction. Interestingly, gains over all tests averaged only 1% for eighth graders while secondary school students averaged a loss of 6% when no newspapers were used.

Table 2

Mean Percentage Improvement (M) from Pretest to Posttest and Number of Students (n) under Conditions of Newspaper Usage in Classrooms

	Newspapers With Instruction (Active)	Newspapers Without Instruction (Passive)	Newspapers Not Used (Control)
Middle Schools (8th graders)			
Reading Vocabulary			
M	5.8	4.5	4.0
n	90	72	59
Reading Comprehension			
M	4.9	3.2	-0.6
n	86	71	53
Writing Performance			
M	11.9	0.0	0.0
n	86	66	52
Secondary Schools (9th-12th graders)			
Reading Vocabulary			
M	8.8	6.2	0.8
n	87	106	59
Reading Comprehension			
M	14.9	4.6	-15.3
n	91	97	54
Writing Performance			
M	9.5	6.1	-2.3
n	70	117	50

These primary results were tested statistically with analysis of covariance: posttest scores under the three conditions with pretest scores as the covariate in order to control for any initial difference in reading and writing skills (Tables 3-8).

Eighth Grade Students

Vocabulary pretest and posttest scores correlated .67 justifying analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) which indicated that, adjusted for initial differences, mean posttest vocabulary differed significantly under the three conditions, $p < .02$. Subsequent comparisons indicated that average performance under newspapers with instruction was significantly higher, $p < .05$, than that under newspaper without instruction which was not significantly different from that under the control condition.

Reading comprehension pretest and posttest scores correlated .67. ANCOVA results showed mean posttest comprehension scores differing significantly under the three conditions, $p < .002$. Individual comparisons indicated that the newspaper with instruction group scored significantly higher than the newspaper without instruction group, $p < .10$, and the newspaper without instruction group scored significantly higher than the control group, $p < .10$.

Writing performance gains were measured from the period October, 1988 (writing sample 1), to April, 1989

(writing sample 3), and correlated .35. ANCOVA results indicated the writing sample 3 mean scores across the three conditions differed significantly, $p < .001$. The newspaper with instruction group scored significantly higher than the newspaper without instruction and control groups, $p < .001$, both of which showed no gains.

Ninth through Twelfth Grade Students

Vocabulary pretest and posttest scores correlated .69. As at the middle school level, analysis of covariance was used to examine differences on mean posttest scores under the three conditions using the pretest to adjust for initial differences. Vocabulary posttest scores showed no significant differences overall under the three conditions. Individual preplanned comparisons, however, did indicate that the newspaper without instruction group scored significantly higher than the control group, $p < .10$.

Reading comprehension pretest and posttest scores correlated .53. ANCOVA results indicated mean comprehension posttest scores differed significantly under the three conditions, $p < .001$. Individual comparisons showed both the newspaper with instruction and newspaper without instruction groups scoring significantly higher than the control group, $p < .01$, but not significantly different from one another.

Writing performance was measured by writing samples 1 and 3, which correlated .46. ANCOVA results showed mean writing sample 3 scores differed significantly under the three conditions, $p < .10$. Individual comparisons indicated that both the newspaper with instruction and newspaper without instruction groups scored significantly higher on writing sample 3, $p < .05$; $p < .10$ respectively, than the control group; but as in reading vocabulary and comprehension, the newspaper with instruction and newspaper without instruction groups were not significantly different from one another.

Middle School

Table 3 shows the mean gains, standard deviations, sample sizes, and F ratios with significant levels for overall ANCOVA results on scores in vocabulary and reading comprehension and scores in writing performance as measured by writing sample 1 to writing sample 3.

Table 3

Middle School Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Writing Gains with ANCOVA Results

	Active			Passive			Control				
Test gains	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	F	p
Vocabulary	1.84	3.23	90	1.50	4.28	72	1.19	5.68	59	4.03	.02
Comprehension	1.90	6.31	86	1.18	5.47	71	-.19	7.98	53	6.42	.002
Writing	.56	1.11	86	.0	1.21	66	.0	1.31	52	10.84	.001

Note: Writing gains are for the period October, 1988, to April, 1989.

Table 4 presents the preplanned comparisons showing the active group significantly outperforming the passive group in reading vocabulary, F (1,159) = 3.99, $p < .05$; in reading comprehension, F (1,154) = 3.05, $p < .10$; and in writing performance, F (1,149) = 12.05, $p < .001$. The active group significantly outperformed the control group in vocabulary, F (1,146) = 7.83, $p < .01$; in reading comprehension, F (1,136) = 13.71, $p < .001$; and in writing performance, F (1,135) = 17.93, $p < .001$. In reading comprehension, the passive group significantly outperformed the control group, F (1,121) = 3.22, $p < .10$.

Table 4

Middle School Preplanned Comparisons with ANCOVA Results

Gains	A > P	A > C	P > C
Vocabulary	**	***	n.s
Comprehension	*	****	*
Writing	****	****	n.s.

* = < .10
** = < .05
*** = < .01
**** = < .001
n.s. = not significant

A = active
P = passive
C = control

Writing sample performance was measured for the period October, 1988, to April, 1989.

Table 5 shows the Pearson Product Moment correlations between the pretest and posttest scores in reading vocabulary and reading comprehension for the 199 middle school students who took all four tests.

Table 5

Middle School Correlation Matrix: Vocabulary and Comprehension Pretest and Posttest

	Vocabulary Posttest	Comprehension Pretest	Comprehension Posttest
Vocabulary Pretest	.67	.56	.55
Vocabulary Posttest		.43	.60
Comprehension Pretest			.67

n = 199

Secondary School

Table 6 shows the mean gains, standard deviations, sample sizes, and F ratios with significance levels for the overall ANCOVA results on scores in vocabulary, reading comprehension, and scores in writing performance from writing sample 1 to writing sample 3.

Table 6

Secondary School Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Writing Sample Gains with ANCOVA Results

	Active			Passive			Control				
Test gains	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	F	p
Vocabulary	1.92	6.71	87	1.47	6.17	106	-.22	6.99	59	1.94	n.s.
Comprehension	3.35	10.28	91	1.21	6.99	97	-4.04	13.75	54	9.97	.001
Writing	.40	1.34	70	.27	1.26	117	-.10	1.40	50	2.29	.10

Note: Writing sample gains are for the period October, 1988, to April, 1989.

Preplanned comparisons showed that the active group significantly outperformed the control group in reading comprehension, F (1,142) = 9.61, $p < .002$, and in writing performance, F (1,117) = 4.41, $p < .04$. The passive group significantly outperformed the control group in reading vocabulary, F (1,162) = 3.68, $p < .06$, in reading comprehension, F (1,148) = 17.43, $p < .001$, and in writing performance F (1,164) = 2.88, $p < .10$. Writing sample performance was measured for the period of October, 1988, to April, 1989. Table 7 shows this.

Table 7

Secondary School Preplanned Comparisons with ANCOVA Results

Gains	A > P	A > C	P > C
Vocabulary	n.s.	n.s.	*
Comprehension	n.s.	***	****
Writing	n.s.	**	*

* = < .10
** = < .05
*** = < .01
**** = < .001
n.s. = not significant

A = active
P = passive
C = control

Table 8 shows the Pearson Product Moment correlations between the pretest and posttest scores in reading vocabulary and reading comprehension for the 214 secondary school students who took all four tests.

Table 8

Secondary School Correlation Matrix: Vocabulary and Comprehension Pretest and Posttest

	Vocabulary Posttest	Comprehension Pretest	Comprehension Posttest
Vocabulary Pretest	.69	.57	.42
Vocabulary Posttest		.49	.51
Comprehension Pretest			.53

$n = 214$

Middle and Secondary Interactions

The variable number of children in the family as reported by the student was used to dichotomize family size--families with 3 children or less being small and 4 or more being large. The dichotomy of morning and afternoon classes was determined by whether or not students met before or after lunch.

At the middle school level, no significant interactions existed between scores in reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, or writing performance and gender, the dichotomy of small and large families, or the dichotomy of morning and afternoon classes.

At the secondary school level, the only significant interaction, $F = 2.34$, $p < .10$, existed between scores in reading vocabulary and gender across the three groups. Males outperformed females in the active and passive groups, while females outperformed males in the control group.

Table 9

Secondary School Vocabulary Gains by Gender across the Active, Passive, and Control Groups

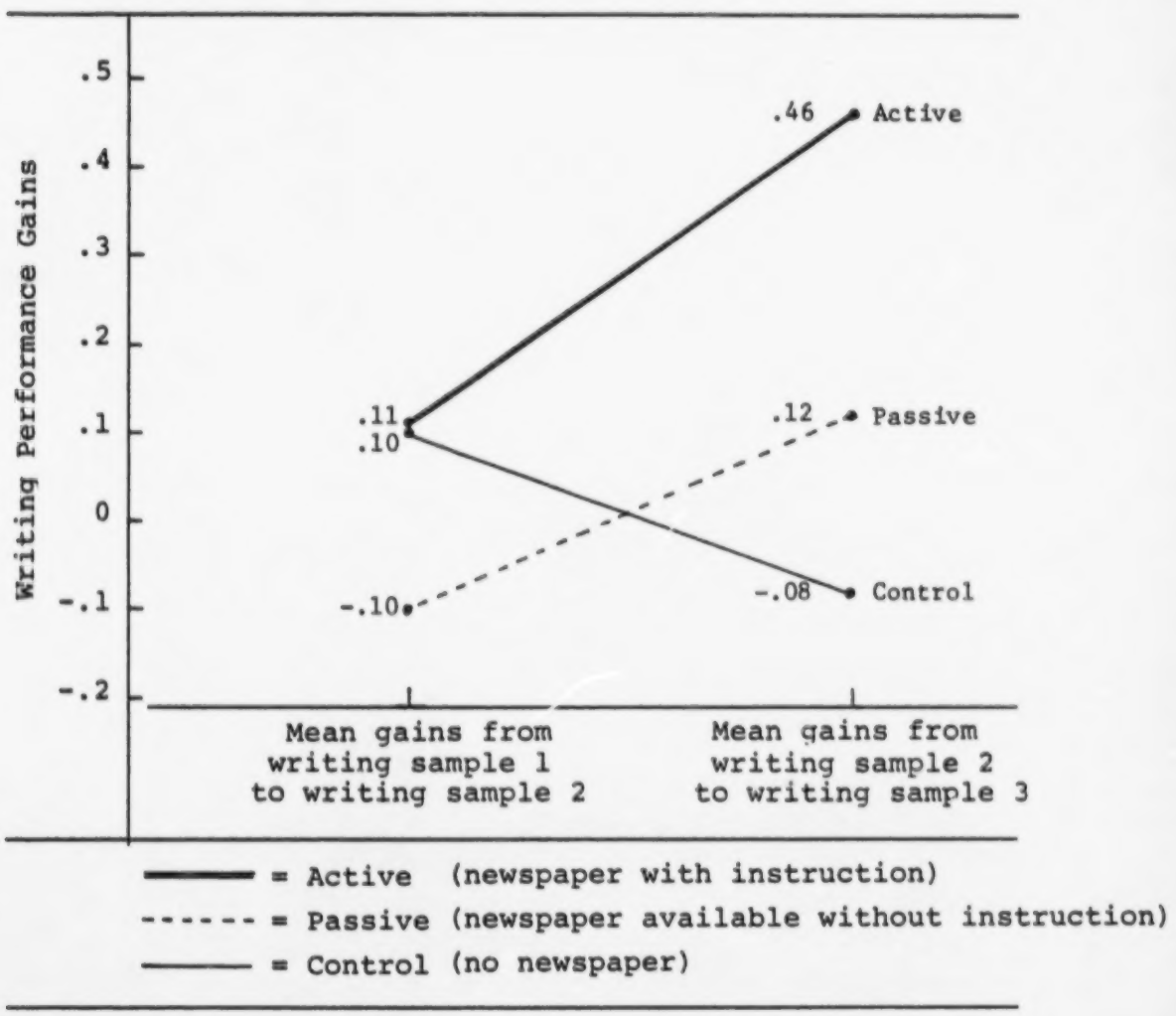
Gender	Vocabulary Gains								
	Active			Passive			Control		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Males	2.3	7.7	51	2.0	6.5	63	-1.4	7.0	40
Females	1.6	4.9	36	.7	5.5	43	2.2	6.3	19

Use of Newspapers Over Time

Figure 1 shows that at the middle school level, over time, the use of newspapers (both in the active and passive groups) consistently produced greater gains in writing performance than no use of newspapers, with dramatic gains in the active group from writing sample 2 to 3. The active group exceeded the passive group, and the passive group exceeded the control group, at the middle school level. Most importantly, as the treatment time increased, so did the gains in writing performance.

Figure 1

Middle School Writing Gains Over Time



Middle and Secondary School Bilingualism

Due to a limited number of bilingual subjects at both the middle and secondary levels, no inferences can be made as to performance on the dependent variables of reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing performance. Also, it appears that the bilingual students were atypical; i.e., at the middle school level, all bilingual students indicated that their better language was English; and all but four students at the secondary level indicated the same (see Appendix H).

Middle and Secondary School Dropouts

This study also was designed to examine any differential effects of the newspaper-based instruction on at-risk population dropout rates. Dropout data were reported by the teachers at the end of the study. The official Leon County 1988-89 dropout data will not be available until October, 1989.

The reported findings at the middle school level showed that of the 78 students not completing the study, 6 were known to have dropped out, all of which were in the control group. Of the 151 secondary school students not completing the study, 43 were known to have dropped out, 12 in the active treatment condition, 22 in the passive treatment condition, and 9 in the control group. A chi-square goodness of fit test revealed that the 3 ratios were not significantly different as to dropout rate among the 3 groups at the secondary level.

Sample of Teacher Testimonials

Many of the teachers in the active and passive groups indicated that once the pilot study was over, students asked, "Where are the newspapers?"

Other comments from teachers included the following:

- The active group enjoyed the newspapers immensely and wanted to do related activities.
- Students were intrigued with the special series on "Crack" featured in the Tallahassee Democrat. Many good discussions related to this real-life issue preceded and followed their newspaper readings.
- Students frequently arrived early to class asking if they might start reading the newspaper.
- The world knowledge students get from the newspaper is essential for their productive involvement as citizens.
- This research project is especially beneficial to the large percentage of our students who don't have newspapers in the home.
- We've enjoyed less disruptive behavior as a result of having a versatile instructional medium, the newspaper.

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Given the limitation of this study with regard to the number of bilingual subjects, research with a larger bilingual population such as that found in Dade County (Miami, Florida) is recommended.
2. Since this study represents a first effort in researching newspaper-based instruction and writing performance, replication is recommended.
3. When possible in the future, cohort studies could be conducted using previous years' data (for example, number of disciplinary problems, absenteeism, SAT scores, etc.) as a basis for comparing the effect of this treatment with gains in previous years.
4. More research needs to be conducted in the area of teacher training and effective use of the newspaper in the classroom.

Appendix A

Newspaper Articles Related to At-Risk Students

The grades are tallied

Florida schools falter on annual report card

By Gregory Spears
Democrat Washington bureau

WASHINGTON — Florida had the highest dropout rate of any state in the nation in 1987, and its students' scores on college-entrance tests are dropping, according to a federal report issued Wednesday.

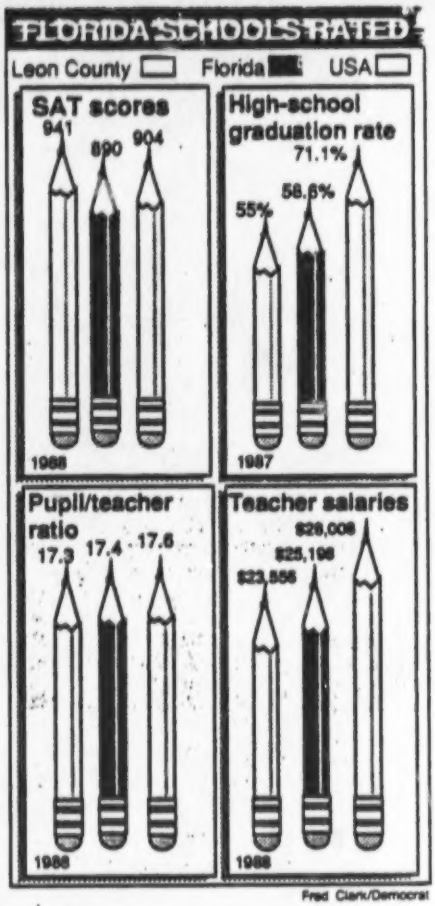
The dismal news came in the U.S. Education Department's annual report card on public and private schools, which gave a gloomy appraisal of education across the nation.

"We must do better or perish as the nation we know today," Education Secretary Lauro Cavazos said at a news conference. "We are standing still, and the problem is that it's been this way for three years in a row. And frankly, this situation scares me, and I hope it scares you too."

Florida Education Commissioner Betty Castor called the results "very discouraging and totally unacceptable" and vowed that Florida would do better. "We've got to really concentrate our efforts on students we currently don't reach."

Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi — traditional underachievers in national rankings — all had higher percentages of students graduating from high school

Please see SCHOOLS, 2A



Fred Clark/Democrat

Leon dropout rate exceeds that of state

Democrat staff report

Leon County's high-school dropout problem is worse than the state average, which the U.S. Department of Education calls the worst in the nation.

The same study shows that Leon County is doing a better-than-average job preparing its college-bound students. Only 55 percent of Leon's ninth-graders graduate four years later, compared with 58.6 statewide and 71.1 percent nationwide.

SAT scores for the county remain above state and national averages, despite a decline in average scores over the past three years. At 941, Leon's SAT average for 1988 was 37 points higher than the national average and 51 points above the state average.

Schools

From 1A

than did Florida, where just 58.6 percent of ninth graders get a high-school diploma four years later, according to the report. Only the District of Columbia had a worse graduation rate, with 55.5 percent in 1987.

Castor said the dropout rate for Florida might be exaggerated in the federal study because it doesn't include students earning General Education Diplomas, an adult-education equivalent of a high-school diploma.

Florida's average scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test declined for the second year in a row, from 895 in 1986 to 893 in 1987 and 890 in 1988. SATs are standardized tests taken by college-bound high-school students that measure math and English knowledge. Nationally, SAT scores fell 2 points to 904 in 1988.

Florida ranked 13th among the 22 states that use SATs to measure student performance.

The state's results fell despite the success of some well-publicized efforts to increase spending on education, raise teachers' pay and reduce class size.

For example, per-pupil expenditures rose from $2,443 in 1982 to $3,794 in 1987 — a 55-percent increase that propelled Florida from 38th to 25th in state spending on education.

Teacher salaries rose 50 percent, from an average of $16,780 in 1982 to an estimated $25,198 in 1988, improving the state's standing from 36th in the nation to 28th.

The student-teacher ratio declined from 20 students per teacher in 1982 to 17.4 per teacher last year — moving the state from 38th to 31st in the nation in class size.

Complex and deeply rooted social problems have made Florida's educational troubles more difficult to resolve than those in other states, according to John Ryor, executive director of the Florida Teaching Profession-NEA, the state's largest teaching union.

Among the state's special problems, he said Wednesday, are a higher-than-average number of undernourished students living in unstable homes, plus a large population of Spanish-speaking students who have immigrated recently from Central America.

"June and Ward Cleaver just doesn't describe what's going on today," Ryor said. "One in four children are born out of wedlock and 30 percent of Florida's youngsters are being raised in poverty." He said solving Florida's educational problems will take "a great deal of ingenuity."

On Tuesday, a state-appointed task force recommended a dramatic restructuring of the state's education system, including considering a year-round school schedule and allowing parents to decide where to send their kids to school.

Newspaper can be teachers' aid

CARROL DADISMAN
Publisher

"The newspaper offers an interesting way to cover the mandated basic standards: sequencing of events, cause-and-effect, main idea, critical thinking.

"Basically I'm trying to expand (my students') base of knowledge in different areas — health, geography, politics, world news, local news, science, measurement and time, health and physical science, labeling.

"The newspaper covers everything."

"Everybody needs a base of knowledge. The newspaper covers all bases."

— Martha Grant, Madison County High School Teacher

Martha Grant is one of the most enthusiastic, and most effective, disciples of Newspapers in Education, a concept that touches more than 2 million students in more than 25,000 American schools.

The idea is simple, but profound and far-reaching: Newspapers become supplemental textbooks for creative teachers who use them to educate in every conceivable subject.

"The newspaper is very popular," says Ms. Grant, who uses it in remedial reading and elective reading classes. "... I don't care what they start reading, just that they start. They start with the funnies, and sports, but they eventually end up reading all of the paper.... The newspaper is a wonderful thing to use. It helps kids talk intelligently with adults and impress parents."

The Madison County school is one of 64 schools in 17 Florida and Georgia counties currently using the Tallahassee Democrat on a regular basis — not only in reading classes, but as a means of communicating varied information and concepts at all school levels.

The newspaper reaches the teachers through a half-price, deliver-to-the-schools offer that is standard in Newspaper in Education programs. In addition to standard NIE applications, the Democrat is being used this year in a special research project to test the effectiveness of newspapers in teaching reading and other basics to high school students considered at risk of dropping out because of limited literacy skills.

Early reports from teachers in the research project are very positive.

Throughout Florida, most county school systems and many private schools utilize one or more newspapers as classroom tools. The Democrat's NIE coordinator, Laurie Doyle, has counterparts at all major Florida dailies, and the Florida Department of Education has a full-time NIE coordinator, Barbara Shapley of Tallahassee.

Florida's NIE program is one of the most extensive and best-organized in the nation. At the most recent Florida Cabinet meeting, the educators and NIE coordinators were recognized for their contributions to improving classroom instruction.

The real heroes of NIE, of course, are the teachers and students who find success with this additional vehicle for learning.

"The national educational focus is reading and writing and integrating the two," says Paula Harris, a fifth grade teacher at Astoria Park Elementary School in Leon County. "Our program is a literature-based program, which means that students are introduced to multiple types of good literature — good literature being something that can be enjoyed at any age, such as magazines, trade books, paperbacks, classics, catalogs. Newspapers, especially, fall into this category.

"Writers are readers, and readers are writers. The only way they can learn different writing styles is by reading many different writers. There's a large variety of authorship within the newspaper.

Ms. Harris also uses the newspaper to teach social studies, consumer skills and career awareness.

Pauline Sauls, coordinator of alternative education (Project Success) at Lincoln High School, a teacher for 30 years, values the newspaper as a "substitute textbook for reading, a resource book for career education research, a challenge for communication skills and a tool to utilize communication skills — written and oral."

The Democrat is used in other special education applications in Leon County.

Judy Fisher, a Ph.D. from FSU in reading and language arts, uses the newspaper to interest and educate high school drop-outs.

"They can get so much information, even if they can't read every word," Ms. Fisher says. "... Almost anything that can be taught, can be taught with the newspaper."

Later this year, through the local research project that may become a benchmark for the nation, we will know how effective the newspaper can be in keeping more of those drop-outs in school. Meanwhile, teachers here and elsewhere continue to demonstrate that newspapers and educators, when creatively combined, make an effective team for improving Florida's education.

Tallahassee Democrat/Sun., March 12, 1989

School system failure demands radical changes

CARROL DADISMAN
Publisher

More than 700,000 American students drop out of school every year without getting even a high school education. That's an average of 3,600 every school day.

And that's not the worst news.

More than 700,000 additional students, by some believable counts, graduate from our high schools without being functionally literate.

Even that is not the worst news.

The worst news is that, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, most jobs of the future will require not only a high school education (and functional literacy), but the equivalent of two years of additional training.

The crisis in American education is on the brink of becoming the tragedy of American education.

Listen to these voices from just the past few days:

Looking at virtually every qualitative measure ... we see our students performing minimally, lacking the advanced skills needed to succeed ... We must do better or perish as the nation we know today. — U.S. Education Secretary Lauro Cavazos, in issuing the U.S. Education Department's annual report card on student performance.

Unless we deepen our commitment to save urban schools, this nation will be economically and socially imperiled. — Willie Herenton, superintendent of the Memphis, Tenn., public school system, at the American Newspaper Publishers Association. (ANPA) convention in Chicago on April 25.

Unless we restructure our public schools, America is going to be out of business by the year 2000. ... We simply won't have enough people with the skills to be competitive in this advanced global economy. — David T. Kearns, chief executive officer, Xerox Corp., on the same ANPA program.

This is not just Florida's problem, but the state's shameful dropout rate and its crime rate are two very related statistics that show clearly the failure of our current system. We have a tragically human crisis on our hands; we are losing thousands of kids every year, and tinkering is not going to solve the problem. — Robert A. Morris Jr., Sarasota businessman, in unveiling the report of a statewide task force subcommittee that studied Florida's education system.

Totally unacceptable. — Florida Education Commissioner Betty Castor, reacting to Florida statistics on the federal report card.

Castor put her finger on one of the keys to turnaround: "We've got to really concentrate our efforts on students we currently don't reach."

Public school education in Florida and elsewhere could fill libraries with success stories — merit scholars, exemplary students, sterling teachers, extraordinary SAT scores, transformations from indifference to industriousness.

Distressingly, those success stories are more than outweighed by education's failure "on students we currently don't reach." (At this point, let's acknowledge that education's failure, in the larger sense, is society's failure. But our cure has to begin in the classroom.)

In Florida, more than two of every five students who start aren't around for high school graduation. An abundance of statistics, and a wealth of human experience, demonstrate that many of the three-fifths who do graduate are not ready to pull their weight in society — let alone to advance America's culture and competitive position in the global economy.

Money is not going to solve education's crisis.

In Florida, per-pupil expenditures went from $2,443 in 1982 to $3,794 in 1987, a 55 percent increase in five years. We didn't make the coveted upper quartile, but the state advanced significantly in national rankings of spending for public education, teacher salaries and student-teacher ratio.

Yet test scores and drop-out rates didn't improve. They worsened.

Nationally, taxpayers have funded a 25 percent increase in school spending over the last five years, still well above the inflation rate of that period. But test scores and dropout rates indicate the quality of our systems is stagnant, at best.

If money isn't the answer, what is?

Kearns, co-author of a book on the state of American education, says nothing short of a complete restructuring will suffice. Among other things, he would strip away some of the education bureaucracy and push responsibility down to teachers and principals.

In turn, teachers and principals would have to be more accountable. Schools would operate year-round. Parents would have a choice of public schools, creating more competition — and thus more excellence — among schools and teachers. Basic core curriculum courses, and high academic standards, would be required of all students, with no more vocational and "general education" tracks.

Obviously, some of his ideas are more easily articulated than accomplished. Maybe some are not worth doing. But it's time to try *something* radically different.

The Florida subcommittee, part of a public-private Partners in Productivity task force appointed by Gov. Bob Martinez, echoed most of Kearns' recommendations and added many of its own, including:

- Tying a "meaningful portion" of principals' and teachers' salaries and performance evaluations to their ability to measurably increase student performance and retention.
- Increasing productivity of administrative personnel by at least 10 percent in the next three years through efficiencies and reorganization.
- Increasing use of computers and other instructional technology.
- Measuring and monitoring drop-out levels more closely; allowing students to repeat only the course they fail, and not the entire grade level (students who repeat an entire grade have a 40 percent chance of dropping out), and assisting and recognizing teachers who successfully entice at-risk students to remain in school.

Many more recommendations, with supporting evidence, are offered by Morris' subcommittee, which included attorney/banker Duby Ausley of Tallahassee, Burke Kibler of Holland and Knight in Lakeland and Pat Tornillo of the Florida Education Association in Miami, among others.

Their proposals deserve the attention — and action — of the Florida Legislature, the governor and educators at every level.

Just tinkering with the public school system hasn't worked and won't work. Turf protection, refusal to establish accountability and staying in the ruts of the past will doom us to the disasters described above.

Dramatically new approaches must be tried if we are to save our schools, and our future.

Will we insist on them?

Take a closer look at high-school dropout statistics

MY VIEW
Charles Couch

However, the use of the numbers and the resulting public reaction to Leon County's supposed "high dropout rate" provided an excellent example of the damage that can be done with poorly explained or misunderstood statistics.

Recently, the Democrat printed an article by a community columnist entitled "High dropout rate demands attention." While the article was well-written, it contained misleading information about "dropouts" and about Leon County schools that should be cleared up for the citizens of this community.

It is important to point out that the blame for this misleading information is not to be placed at the feet of the author of the article. She used accurate numbers provided by the Florida Department of Education as reported by Leon County schools. However, the use of the numbers and the resulting public reaction to Leon County's supposed "high dropout rate" provided an excellent example of the damage that can be done with poorly explained or misunderstood statistics.

First of all, the article assumed that graduation rate and dropout rate are one and the same. This is not true.

The graduation rate is a number calculated by the Florida Department of Education. It compares the number of students who enter 9th grade in a particular year in a school district with the number of students who receive a diploma from the traditional school program in that district four years later.

The graduation rate does not take into consideration students who, among other things move to another district prior to graduation, transfer into an adult education or vocational completion program or are retained for a grade. On the other hand, it does reflect students who transfer in from another district or from a private school after 9th grade. It's possible, in a high transient area, that few students reflected in the senior year total were present in the district' schools during their 9th grade.

The dropout rate is calculated differently than the graduation rate. It tells us that, of the students in a certain grade level or range of grade levels, a certain percentage left the formal educational system for some reason (other than by death) during a given year without successfully completing an approved program of study.

Thus, it should be obvious that not every student who does not receive within four years a standard diploma from the school at which he began 9th grade is a dropout. The labels graduation and dropout rate are "apples and oranges" and must not be used interchangeably when evaluating the success of a school district's program. Actually, the graduation rate, as it is currently calculated and reported, is not only easily misunderstood but a rather useless statistic.

The 1986 graduation rate for Leon County Schools, using the state's method of calculation and as reported in this article, was 50 percent. Using this same method, the 1987 graduation rate is 50.71 percent. However, a great number of the other 49.29 percent of the students are not, by definition, high school dropouts.

Instead, many have been awarded a special diploma, GED (General Education Development) diploma, or a certificate of completion. Others transferred out of the district prior to graduation and have graduated from a school in another district. Still others are enrolled in an adult education or vocational training program. Finally, some of these students have been retained and are expected to graduate at the end of their fifth year of high school. Again, these students are not dropouts.

When the graduation rate is calculated to reflect the students who can truly be counted as having completed or are in the process of completing an approved educational program, Leon County's rate for 1987 is between 81 percent and 84 percent. When these same adjustments are made state-wide, the state-wide graduation rate for this same year falls between 80.78 percent and 84.28 percent.

Democrat file

Leon County's graduation rate isn't as dire as reported

Local educators know that the actual graduation rate, while not as dire as it is being reported, needs attention. We must do a better job of keeping students from "falling through the cracks."

By paying careful attention to those students who actually drop out of school, we are able to determine areas of program strength and weakness. We can also construct a profile of the students who are not achieving success in our schools. With this, we are able to identify students who match this profile early in their school years and provide the extra (or different kind of) help which they need.

Leon County School District has recently made great improvements in the way that students are tracked and data is organized and reported. More importantly, a strong, coordinated plan of dropout prevention is currently being designed and implemented. Through these efforts, this community should soon be receiving more information about student success because the number of students who are successful will increase.

Charles Couch is superintendent of the Leon County School System.

LOCAL/STATE

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C

Florida leads states in dropout rate

Associated Press

MIAMI — Florida's high-school dropout rate has risen to 38 percent, topping all other states, a U.S. Department of Education report shows.

Castor

Only the District of Columbia, with a 43.2-percent dropout rate, surpassed Florida.

"Dropping out of school is public education enemy No. 1," said Betty Castor, state commissioner of education. "I hope we can gain from this report by using it to get everyone's attention."

Statistics about students in each of the 50 states and several areas were publicized in the fifth annual Wall Chart report, released Thursday. The report compared students from different school systems on the basis of college-entrance examinations, high-school graduation rates, teacher salaries and other categories.

The average American student taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test, a college-entrance exam graded from 400 to 1,600, remained at 906. But the average Florida student's score slipped from 895 to 893 after rising 11 points last year.

Florida teacher salaries ranked 29th, with an average of $23,788. The national average was $26,551.

The study showed that Florida ranked 13th in the percentage of minority students enrolled. About 35 percent of Florida high-school students are minorities.

"Minority students have a larger percentage of dropouts," said Mary Anne Havriluk, Castor's press secretary.

Castor has said that she will ask the Legislature this year to approve $43 million for a preschool program for disadvantaged students. Studies have shown that students who drop out usually show signs of difficulty at an early age.

An early-warning system is already being used in Dade County, where the dropout rate dropped from 29.5 percent for the class of 1984 to 24 percent for the class of 1986.

"The early-warning system went into effect in 1984, and it tracks the students beautifully," said Roger Cuevas, assistant superintendent for dropout, drug, suicide and pregnancy prevention.

The system alerts principals of all students in grades 4-12 who fit the profile of a potential dropout. It flags students who have been suspended, students with low reading scores and those with three Ds or worse on their report cards.

Cuevas said the early-warning system also started flagging students enrolled for more than three years in English classes for children who have a different first language.

The program requires each school to hire at least one secondary counselor and one occupational specialist.

After the student has been spotted, he or she is directed into one of dozens of "educational alternative" programs for special assistance.

Officials take issue with report

By Jeff Schweers
Democrat staff writer

Local school officials Friday disputed the accuracy and relevance of Education Secretary William Bennett's Wall Chart.

That report gave Florida the lowest graduation rate among the 50 states, at 62 percent, compared to the national average of 72 percent.

"The most serious criticism of Secretary Bennett's Wall Chart is that students from each state are compared but calculated differently," said Al Piotrowski, district testing, evaluation and research director. "It's like comparing apples and oranges."

Within Florida, Leon County's graduation rate is seventh-worst of the 67 counties. The state figures that Leon County has a 58-percent graduation rate. But county school officials quarrel with the way the state counts dropouts, saying that many students who complete their education by night school and GED diplomas are not included.

"It looks like we're not doing as good a job as we could, but we're doing a better job than everyone thinks we are," said Bob Connors, assistant superintendent of schools.

Connors said the county was trying to keep students from dropping out. He cited programs like Project Success, and an effort to monitor students who seem to be potential dropouts "to catch them before we lose them."

78

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99

Tallahassee Democrat

July 20, 1989

School dropouts are an ever-growing problem in this country

MY VIEW
Joe Mizereck

A few weeks ago I attended a high-school graduation. From the football-field bleachers, I watched nearly four-hundred young people receive their diplomas. These students had succeeded. However, I thought of the students who were not there to receive their diplomas. When I looked at the rows of happy and proud graduates, I kept seeing empty chairs – chairs that could have and should have been filled. But they were empty because students had either dropped out or been pushed out of school along the way.

According to Mary Futrell, president of the National Education Association, at least one million students drop out of school each year and an additional 300,000 are chronically truant. As many as one-third of America's 40 million public school students are "at risk" of becoming dropouts, addicts, criminals, teenage parents, illiterate, dependent, etc.

In major urban areas the dropout rate ranges from 35 to 50 percent and the rates keep climbing. Nationwide the dropout rate is reaching 27 percent. Sixty-seven percent of drop outs are functionally illiterate.

The dropout rate for the state of Florida is calculated in two ways. When the DOE uses one formula it gets a 7 percent rate. This is based on a one day count of all students in grades 9 through 12 taken in October 1988. When the second formula is used, Florida has a 33 percent dropout rate. The DOE arrived at this rate by counting the total student membership in grade nine during the 1982-83 school year and recounting the membership four years later to see how many students graduated. When they recounted during the 1985-86 school year, they found that 33 percent of the students did not receive their standard diplomas.

In Leon County, 45 percent of the students in the ninth grade during the 1982-83 school year did not receive their diplomas four years later. More specifically, 39 percent (559) of the white students, 56 percent (379) of the black students, 60 percent (8) of the Hispanic students and 100 percent (3) of the Indian students did not graduate.

With Florida's mobile population it is incredibly difficult to determine the dropout rate with any certainty. However, the DOE is currently implementing an Automated Student Information System that will be in place by August of 1989 and will provide more current and accurate information.

The Stanford Education Policy Institute estimates high school dropouts cost the nation as much as $278 billion per year in unemployment and welfare payments, lost tax revenues, additional law enforcement expenses and a variety of other societal costs. For the individual dropout, the picture is bleak. According to the Joint Economic Committee, three of every four new jobs by 1990 will require some training beyond high school. These jobs will also require proficiency in reading, writing and basic math reasoning – skills that most dropouts lack.

These "at risk" youths are primarily students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Among ethnics, Hispanics have the highest dropout rates, followed by blacks, then whites. However, the greatest number of students dropping out of school are white students. Most are male, live in a single-parent home, lack basic skills, have low self-esteem and believe they have little, if any control over their future.

What should be done?

First of all, this is not a "school problem." At risk students and dropouts are a social, economic and political problem. It is our problem and each of us – teachers, parents, elected officials and other community members – must share a role in resolving it.

Second, I think we must examine ourselves and our institutions to determine if in fact we are "pushing" students out of school. For the past five years we have been supporting an excellence movement in education. However, not all students can be excellent. We have raised the standards for graduation in most states and done an inadequate job of helping students meet those new standards. Among those expected to meet these standards have been the at risk students. How many of them dropped out because the movement is aimed top priority?

We know the causes of the dropout problem. What we lack is the commitment, the resources and the cooperation in our search for solutions. Therefore, additional federal, state and local investments in new and existing dropout programs and in more definitive research on the scope of the problem are urgently needed.

We must discover ways to hold at risk students in school and, while there, provide them with the support and opportunities that will change their lives. We need to do this early in the elementary and middle school years because after they reach high school their problems are often uncontrollable.

We need to provide genuine alternative educational programs, not dumping grounds. In this respect, we should make a greater effort at designing high-tech vocational training programs.

In 1848 Horace Mann stated that "education . . . is the great equalizer of the condition of men. . . ." For thousands of young people who will soon be adults, ignorance will be their equalizer. We must act now to make certain that all the chairs at next year's graduation have young people sitting in them ready to become productive workers as well as effective parents and good citizens. We cannot afford to have it any other way.

Joe Mizereck is a former Pinellas County teacher now in graduate school at Florida State University.

Appendix B

Journal Articles

Related to Whole Language

Whole Language: What's new?

Whole Language shares some ties to other theories and to various methods, but it isn't the same—it isn't the whole word approach, nor merely teaching skills in context, nor a method for packaged products, nor the Language Experience Approach, nor a new term for the Open Classroom. It's an overriding theory and point of view about language, literacy, and content learning.

Bess Altwerger
Carole Edelsky
Barbara M. Flores

More and more educators are warming to a new idea in education—Whole Language. Wherever we go, we hear statements which support Whole Language at the same time as they reveal questions or outright confusions about it. So while we are delighted with the increasing popularity, we wonder what it is that is popular: the idea of Whole Language? The label? Innovation per se?

Educational innovations have not fared well in the United States. Open Education was a recent casualty. It was widely distorted so that open space was substituted for openness of ideas, learning centers for learning-centeredness. The final irony is that it was judged a failure even though (because of the distortions) it was never implemented on any broad scale (a few exceptions still exist—e.g., Prospect School in Vermont, Central Park East in New York City, and scattered classrooms elsewhere).

Whole Language is too good an idea to suffer such a fate. Widespread understanding of the substance, rather than widespread adoption of the label might be one way to prevent this possibility. Though Goodman's monograph, *What's Whole in Whole Language* (1986), will certainly help, we see a need to address the specific points of confusion and particular questions we are frequently asked about Whole Language. But first a brief description.

Whole Language: What is it?

First and foremost: Whole Language is *not* practice. It is a set of beliefs, a perspective. It must become practice but it is not the practice itself. Journals, book publishing, literature study, thematic science units and so forth do not make a classroom "Whole Language." Rather, these practices become Whole Language-like because the teacher has particular beliefs and intentions.

Whole Language is based on the following ideas: (a) language is for making meanings, for accomplishing purposes; (b) written language is language—thus what is true for language in general is true for written language; (c) the cuing systems of language (phonology in oral, orthography in written language, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics) are always simultaneously present and interacting in any instance of language in use; (d) language use always occurs in a situation; (e) situations are critical to meaning-making.

Since language in use is taken to have at least the features listed above, the implication is that anyone using language (a baby, an adult, a second language learner) is using all systems in making meaning to accomplish purposes.

The key theoretical premise for Whole Language is that, the world over, babies acquire a language through actually using it, not through practicing its separate parts until some later date when the parts are assembled and the totality is finally used. The major assumption is that the model of acquisition through real use (not through practice exercises) is the best model for thinking about and helping with the learning of reading and writing and learning in general.

Language acquisition (both oral *and* written) is seen as natural—not in the sense of innate or inevitably unfolding, but natural in the sense that when language (oral or written) is an integral part of the functioning of a community and is used around and with neophytes, it is learned "incidentally" (Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982; Lindfors, 1987).

Certain practices are especially congruent with a Whole Language framework. The overriding consideration regarding classroom reading and writing is that these be real reading and writing, not exercises in reading and writing (see Edelsky and Draper, in press, and Edelsky and Smith, 1984 for a full description of authenticity in reading and writing). Beyond that, Whole Language classrooms are rich in a variety of print. Little use is made of materials written specifically to teach reading or writing. Instead, Whole Language relies heavily on literature, on other print used for appropriate purposes (e.g., cake mix directions used for really making a cake rather than for finding short vowels), and on writing for varied purposes.

Because language is considered a tool for making sense of something else, the "something elses" (science, social studies topics) have prominence. Social studies and science topics receive a big chunk of the school day, providing contexts for much of the real reading and writing. Assessment is focused on constant kid watching (Goodman, 1985) and on documenting growth in children's actual work rather than on comparing scores on work substitutes.

Whole Language is thus a perspective on language and language acquisition with classroom implications extending far beyond literacy. Many descriptions of Whole Language appear in the literature (e.g., Edelsky, 1986; Edelsky, Draper, and Smith, 1983; Goodman, 1986; Goodman and Goodman, 1981; Harste, Woodward, and Burke, 1984; Newman, 1985).

Nevertheless, as we indicated, questions persist about what Whole Language is and what it isn't.

Questions about Whole Language

We will address the following:

1. Is Whole Language another term for the whole word approach?
2. Is Whole Language a new way of saying "teach skills in context" with an emphasis on comprehension skills?
3. Is Whole Language a method? A "slant" that can be given to phonics programs, basals, or language arts software?
4. Is Whole Language a new term for Language Experience?
5. Is Whole Language a new term for Open Education?

These are all reasonable questions, having a foundation in current practice, recent history, or prevailing beliefs. Therefore, as we present each question, we will first ground that question with its own sensibleness before presenting a Whole Language answer to the question.

● *Is Whole Language a new term for the whole word approach?*

It could be...

Equating Whole Language with whole word may stem from a conception of reading as a matter of "getting the words." The Great Debate (Chall, 1967) was presented and continues to be thought of as a debate between two distinctly different conceptions of reading—look/say and phonics. Actually, the two are simply variations on a single theme—a phonics approach to "getting the words" and a look-say or whole word approach to "getting the words." Each has strong roots in behaviorism (i.e., getting the words means *saying* the words).

Conventional wisdom and school paraphernalia support the notion that reading is "getting the words," indeed that language development amounts to *knowing* words. Vocabulary exercises and tests are an important part of many language arts series, reading instruction and assessment programs. Moreover, vocabulary is one means of social class gatekeeping. Much, then, in the general and school cultures supports the idea that reading amounts to "getting the words" and that there are only two basic ways to "get words." It is reasonable to assume that Whole Language might be one of them.

But it isn't

The Whole Language view of reading is not one of getting the words but of constructing meaning (see the development of this view in the writings of K. Goodman (Gollasch, 1982). Word boundaries and lexical features are indeed used as cues, but meaning is created with many other cues too—syntax, semantics, pragmatics (including the reader's purpose, the setting, what the reader knows about the author's purpose). To believe that reading means getting words assumes that words have constant meanings; yet words like *Mary, lamb, had,* and *little* in the following examples derive meaning from the clauses which follow them.

(1) Mary had a little lamb
Its fleece was white as snow.

(2) Mary had a little lamb
She spilled mint jelly on her dress.

(3) Mary had a little lamb
It was such a difficult delivery the vet needed a drink.

(Example adapted from Trabaso, 1981.)

The varied meanings of *Mary, had, little,* and *lamb* provide evidence that as we read, we create tentative texts, assigning tentative within-text word meanings which must often be revised based on later cues.

A belief in reading as getting and *saying* the word implies that we have to know a word orally in order to read it (get its meaning). In fact, we learn words through reading just as we learn

them through conversing. (How many of us learned words like *Penelope* and *orgy* through print and were later surprised to discover they did not rhyme with *antelope* and *morgue-y*?)

A vocabulary item is not part of a list of words in our brain but a set of potentials (e.g., meaning potentials, word class information, morphological possibilities, possible metaphorical usages) related to other sets of potentials, embedded in a variety of schemas. It is the set, the range, and the schema-type storage that permit us to relate the two lines in examples (1), (2), and (3) so that we create different meanings with them.

A belief that reading means getting words also assumes that word meanings, once "gotten," are added up to produce a text meaning. In fact, the whole far exceeds the sum of the parts. Print provides a text potential (Harste, Woodward, and Burke, 1984; Rosenblatt, 1978, 1985). When we read, we turn that potential into an actual instance, creating details of meaning that must be inferred from but do not appear in the printed cues.

The meaning, that is, can *never* be *in* the print. Whole Language focuses on texts-in-situations, creating meaningful texts by filling in. A whole word approach, by contrast, has a completely different focus, is based on a completely different conception of reading, and entertains faulty premises concerning words and word meanings.

● *Is Whole Language another term for teaching skills in context?*

It could be...

A popular view of language use (oral and written) is that it consists of isolatable skills (e.g., decoding skills, pronunciation skills, comprehension skills of finding the main idea, using details), separately learnable and separately teachable (DeFord, 1985; Harste and Burke, 1977). This is part of a more general assumption: If it is possible to identify subskills or subactivities in the proficient performance of any complex activity, then those subactivities should be taught separately. Tests of separate skills invade education to such an extent that they ensure that the idea of separate skills remains a given.

A similarly "small parts" viewpoint is common regarding *context.* Context is often seen as a background "part" *rather* than the crucial medium for as well as the inevitable creation of language use. Sometimes context is reduced to meaning merely the verbal setting (e.g., the story as background for the sentence, the sentence as background for the word). Such small parts conceptions of comprehension and context could be readily applied to a new idea like Whole Language, which in fact relies heavily on *context* and *comprehension.*

Other sources add to the confusion. Beginning Whole Language educators, who do not yet know new ways of talking about their changed views, provide more grist for the skills-in-context mill. So do thoroughly Whole Language teachers who use such descriptions as survival strategies in order to teach according to their Whole Language beliefs in districts permitting only skills instruction. Thus, people have much evidence from the talk of others as well as from their own viewpoints regarding what constitutes written language and context for believing Whole Language is simply teaching skills in context with an emphasis on comprehension skills.

But it isn't

Again, the Whole Language view is that reading/writing are whole activities, that any separate skills or subactivities used outside the total activity are different from that subactivity used within the total activity. Moreover, the subactivity is not merely the behavior. It has a role to play in the total activity;

it interacts with other subactivities; it engenders consequences. If the role, relationships, interactions, and consequences are taken away, what is left is only the behavior—meaningless in itself. It would be as if separate pedaling, handlebar holding, steering, and brake-applying did not need to be integrated, as if they could simply be added together to produce bike riding.

In authentic written language use, cues from one system have an effect on cues from other systems. Thus syntax influences phonology, permitting a reduced vowel when *can* is part of a verb *(the garbage /kən/ go over there)* but not when it is a noun *(the garbage /kæn/ is over there)*. Syntax influences graphophonics so that the unit (initial *th* + vowel) is voiced for function words *(this, their)* but voiceless in content words *(thing, thistle)*. Semantics controls syntactic parsing in such sentences as *flying planes can be dangerous*. Pragmatics is what permits variation in orthography *(lite/light; through/thru)*.

It should be noted that the direction of influence is from high to low: Information from the higher system is required in order to make a decision about the lower. This is just the opposite of the basic skills hierarchy which begins at the supposed beginning—the smaller units and lower levels.

A major Whole Language goal is to help children use, not sever, these interrelationships among cuing systems. The means for achieving that goal is to engage children with authentic texts (versus textoids, as Hunt, in press, calls them) and in authentic reading and writing. A Whole Language framework insists that we become "skilled language users" *not* that we "learn language skills." Altwerger and Resta (1986) have shown that many proficient readers cannot do skills exercises, while many poor readers can. That is, the activity of performing divisible subskills may have little or no relation to the indivisible activity of reading. It is the latter activity which interests Whole Language people.

● *Is Whole Language a method? A program? A "slant" for basals or phonics or other packaged programs?*

It could be...

A tendency to assume that the essence of something is the surface behavior rather than the underlying meaning is legitimized, in the case of Whole Language, by erroneous information from authoritative sources. Documents such as State Reading Guides describe Whole Language as "one of many *methods*." Publishers of instructional materials advertise Whole Language basals and Whole Language phonics programs. Additionally, many educators, anxious to avoid offending or taking a theoretical stand, justify their avoidance by claiming to be eclectic. Link a preference for eclecticism with errors in education documents and advertising pitches from publishers and it is easy to see how Whole Language comes to be (mis)understood as a method or another kind of basal series.

But it isn't

Whole Language is first of all a lens for viewing, a framework that insists that belief shapes practice. Equating it with a method is an error in level of abstraction. Each of the following is an example of one of many methods: writing chart stories with children, conducting spelling drills, holding writers' workshops. None of these are underlying viewpoints. The following are theoretical viewpoints: skills, Whole Language. Neither of these is a method.

Moreover, there are no essential component practices for a Whole Language viewpoint. Some practices are easily made congruent and are therefore typical in Whole Language classrooms (e.g., journals, reading aloud to children, silent reading, literature

study, publishing books, content logs, content thematic units). However, none of these is essential. It would be possible, though impoverishing, to emphasize science projects and exclude literature, yet still have a Whole Language classroom. One could focus entirely on art, music, and drama (writing to publishers to obtain releases for play readings, writing off for catalogues of art openings, staging the school's own gala arts fair), or on a political issue within the community and never write any personal narratives and still have a Whole Language classroom. What *is* essential are component principles or beliefs, including those listed in the earlier section describing Whole Language.

If thinking of Whole Language as method or component parts is a problem in mixing levels of abstraction, wishing to offer a little of everything, to be eclectic, constitutes magical thinking. How idyllic, how "nice" it would be to have no conflict in underlying positions, no basic contradictions. But there *are* basic contradictions (e.g., the idea that reading consists of separate skills contradicts the idea that reading does not consist of separate skills). There is no eclecticism at the level of underlying beliefs whether these beliefs are acknowledged or not. Like a liquid, practice takes the shape of whatever belief-container it is in (Browne, 1985).

Some materials, however, written for the instruction of separate reading or writing subskills conflict with Whole Language beliefs by definition. "Holistic" or not, phonics materials and basal series all entail simulations (quote-reading or quote-writing), either eliminating some subsystems, artificially highlighting others, or ensuring that the learners' purpose must be compliance with an assignment. Thus, the basic Whole Language belief—acquisition through use not exercise—is violated. The only way basal readers or phonics programs could be congruent with Whole Language beliefs would be for children to use them as data—for example, as documents in an historical study of changes in school culture. They could not be used for practicing or learning supposed subskills or written language, including comprehension as a subskill, and be congruent with Whole Language beliefs. (In Whole Language, if there is reading, there is comprehension; if there is no comprehension, there is no reading. Comprehension is not a subskill.)

Whole Language teachers *are* eclectic in the sense of having a large repertoire of materials, modes of interacting, ways of organizing classrooms, etc. Indeed, they are particularly sensitive to the need to vary their approaches with different children for different purposes. However, eclecticism usually means something else in the contexts in which we have heard it—something more like typical practices borrowed from conflicting paradigms, but unwittingly "biased" by one unacknowledged, unexamined single underlying paradigm. In contrast, Whole Language teachers try to be conscious of and reflect on their own underlying beliefs; they deliberately tie practice and theory.

- *Is Whole Language a new term for Language Experience Approach?*

It could be...

The two certainly share some ties in practice. Written statements about Whole Language (Calkins, 1986; Edelsky, Draper, and Smith, 1983; Goodman, 1986; Newman, 1985) and written statements about the Language Experience Approach (Allen, 1976; Ashton-Warner, 1963; Peterson, 1981; Veatch et al., 1973) advocate an abundance of books written by children about their own lives. Both Whole Language and Language Experience

paint images of rich classroom environments; both emphasize the importance of literature. Both treat reading as a personal act, arguing for the need to accept and work with whatever language varieties a child brings to school. Visitors to Whole Language classrooms indeed see children writing books, working with literature, using a variety of symbol systems. Moreover, with the recent popularity of the term Whole Language, many teachers using dictation during their reading instruction time now call this Whole Language, thereby confusing framework (Language Experience Approach; Whole Language) with method (taking dictation). Thus, there are similarities in statements, in practice, and a frequent mislabeling of practice that would give people good reason for thinking Whole Language is a synonym for Language Experience Approach.

But it isn't

One primary difference concerns premises about the relation of oral and written language. Language experience presumes that written language is a secondary system derived from oral language. Whole Language sees oral and written language systems as structurally related without one being an alternate symbolic rendition of the other. Moreover, written language learning need not wait for oral language acquisition. According to Whole Language research, people can learn vocabulary, syntax, and stylistic conventions directly through written language (Edelsky, 1986; Harste, Woodward, and Burke, 1984; Hudelson, 1984).

Dictation provides another symptomatic difference. Language Experience teachers plan frequently for taking dictation from students. Whole Language teachers may take dictation but less frequently and usually only when prompted by the child's request. The underlying reasons for this disparity are critical, revealing an example of evolution in, not merely competition between theories. At the time Language Experience Approach (as a theory) was being developed, the implicit notion about the writing act was that it amounted to taking dictation from oneself, that composing occurred prior to transcribing. By the time Whole Language *theory* was being developed, the conception of writing had evolved to viewing meaning-making as occurring *during* the act of writing (Smith, 1982). Taking dictation deprives language learners of a key context for making meaning—the act of writing. It also deprives them of the opportunity to make a full range of hypotheses.

While Language Experience Approach statements and recommended practices do not state that reading consists of separate skills, they do assume that reading entails knowledge *about* reading and that this set of "subknowledges" is derived from skills lessons and practice (Allen, 1976). Additionally, Language Experience statements (Allen, 1976; Peterson, 1981; Veatch et al., 1973) include recommendations for using programmed materials and teaching about parts of language. Thus, after a child's experience is put to use in dictation, the transcription is often used to teach word attack or phonics skills.

In contrast, Whole Language acknowledges that metalinguistic knowledge is part of written language competence. Progress in theory development and research now allows Whole Language to dispute that such knowledge is best gained through fragmented exercises.

One unfortunate similarity is poor translation. The literature on both Language Experience and Whole Language (let alone actual classroom events) sometimes offers an inadequate vision of how some abstraction might look in real life. For example, in Language Experience statements, important abstractions like *reflection* and

dialogue are trivialized by being put to service in the teaching of punctuation.

The Whole Language literature has its own share of contradictions. Children are supposed to write for their own purposes; yet activities (that word is used advisedly) are suggested wherein children end someone else's story (see recent issues of *Livewire*). Whole Language considers literature a way of knowing and also a critical medium for participating "in the club" of readers and writers (Smith, 1984). Nevertheless, literature is sometimes presented as a "strategy" for teaching reading.

The main distinction, however, between Whole Language and Language Experience is that the latter appealed to no developed theory regarding the nature of language, language acquisition, or the reading process. It made some use of structural linguistics; its references to child language consisted primarily of naive views of vocabulary acquisition (appealing to studies of size and type of vocabulary and of frequently used lexicon).

We must emphasize here that in the 1950s through the 1970s, the Language Experience Approach was the most progressive comprehensive view (i.e., stated assumptions and suggested practice) of written language teaching and learning. As we point out its theoretical inadequacies, we have to remind ourselves that it was developed in the late 1950s, before the advent of Goodman's (1969) revolutionary research on the reading process. That Allen and others did not account for literacy events, speech events, speech acts, or a sociopsycholinguistic model of the reading process reflects historical limits on knowledge rather than individual failure of vision. Even though Language Experience was not accompanied by a paradigm shift regarding written language (the required information was not available), it may have been a necessary precursor to Whole Language.

● *Is Whole Language a new term for the Open Classroom?*

It could be...

Whole Language and the Open Classroom of the 1960s and 1970s certainly bear a family resemblance. Recent comprehensive, respected statements on Open Education (Gross and Gross, 1969; Lucas, 1976; Neill, 1960; Nyquist and Hawes, 1972; Silberman, 1970) advocated something like the Language Experience Approach for literacy instruction. Dewey, more Whole Language-like than his followers, however, thought literacy should only be taught in connection with its use as a tool for something else (Lucas, 1976). Similarities between Language Experience and Whole Language have already been described in the preceding sections. But these are not the only likenesses.

Both Open Education and Whole Language note the active character of learning; both center on "the whole child." Both see learning as rooted in firsthand experience and genuine problem solving. Both concern themselves with more than language and literacy, more than thought or learning in the abstract but with thought-in-interaction, with learning-in-life. Significant content provides a curricular focus in Whole Language as well as Open Education. With so many resemblances, no wonder Whole Language is seen not as a cousin, but as an identical twin of Open Education.

But it isn't

We are deliberately avoiding, for these comparisons, using poor examples of Open Education practice. For example, in the name of Open Education, some classrooms were organized so children rotated, in rigid time blocks, among so-called Learning Centers at which they worked on Ditto sheets (round tables must have seemed more "open" than rectangular desks).

Instead, we want to compare only the prototypical statements and practice in Open Education with the prototypical statements and practice in Whole Language.

An appearance of similar behavior may mask underlying differences. For instance, as we said, Whole Language emphasizes content; so did Open Education of the 1960s. However, the supremacy of "process" over content (perhaps as a vulgarization of the Open Education idea that there is no body of knowledge essential to everyone) became so strong in Open Education that curriculum content could be anything at all, with little attention paid to its disciplinary or social significance. While for Whole Language, the "process" (generating questions, handling data, abstracting, categorizing, etc.) is critical, it does not overshadow content.

The role of the teacher is also similar but different. Bussis and Chittendon (1972) describe a highly active Open Classroom teacher rather than a passive reactor. Many Open Education statements paint the teacher as an ingenious, spontaneous facilitator, provisioner of the environment, and resource person. So do Whole Language statements (e.g., Edelsky, Draper, and Smith, 1983; Newman, 1985).

The distinction here is one of degree. Whole Language statements and workshops offer less on provisioning the environment, highlighting instead how teachers can intervene and fine tune interaction, keeping it theoretically "honest" and congruent with beliefs about language acquisition. In particular areas Whole Language teachers are more likely to actively participate as colearners, to construct meaning together with students rather than simply facilitate. Whole Language teachers also often act like coaches, demonstrating, explaining, and cheering so children can more effectively develop their own writing, drama, or science projects.

Classroom organization differs. Open Classrooms are frequently organized around some secondary structure—Learning Centers or committees, for example, where the grouping structure determines the schedule. Scheduling in Whole Language classrooms is more closely tied to the task (e.g., writing workshops, science project work).

The view of the learner varies. Despite the stress placed by Dewey (and Neill, 1960) on communities, the emphasis in Open Education was the learner as an individual, individually choosing topics of study or, more likely, selecting from among the options the teacher offered at Learning Centers. Whole Language views the learner as profoundly social. Thus practice congruent with Whole Language includes participating in a community of readers during small group literature study, peer writing workshops, group social studies projects with built-in plans for collaborative learning.

Both Open Classroom and Whole Language educators oppose standardized testing. The difference in bases for their opposition is instructive. Open Classroom proponents claim that standardized tests fail to test what teachers are teaching (e.g., self-directedness, problem solving). The tests, in other words, are *insufficient.*

Whole Language educators, on the other hand, argue that the tests fail to test what the tests themselves claim to be testing (i.e., reading). That is, they are *invalid.*

This is a significant difference. It permits highly sophisticated Open Classroom educators (see Meier, 1981) to acknowledge invalidity but to concentrate their criticism on class and ethnic bias. In contrast, while Whole Language educators acknowledge such biases, they concentrate on a different

fundamental problem with reading tests: i.e., the tests can *never* test reading even if class bias could be eliminated (Altwerger and Resta, 1986; Edelsky and Draper, in press).

This discrepancy in rationale for opposing standardized reading tests stems from a distinction in origins of Open Education and Whole Language. Whole Language takes its direction from a particular view of language acquisition and of the reading process. Embedded in that view is a concern with a theoretical definition of the notion of authenticity as applied to reading and writing. It is that definition which allows Whole Language educators to argue that standardized tests are invalid.

This theoretical view of language undergirding Whole Language but absent from Open Education and its embedded Language Experience Approach to literacy instruction (because it was developed later) is the most important difference between these two innovations.

The last distinction we will mention concerns political vision and political context. Open Education's vision includes the belief that it is possible for truly democratic classroom communities to exist within nondemocratic larger contexts. Moreover, experience in such classroom communities according to Open Education, should foster a lifelong demand for similar democratic contexts.

The rebirth after several decades of Open Education in the United States in the 1960s came at a time of both relative prosperity and widespread criticism of inequities endemic throughout society. Whole Language, on the other hand, is gaining momentum at a time when the homeless are increasing, when government social programs have suffered many cuts, when freedom to criticize is threatened by right wing groups such as Accuracy in Media and Accuracy in Academia.

The political vision woven through Whole Language beliefs grows out of this context. Its goal is empowerment of learners and teachers, in part through demystification (demystifying everything from what proficient readers actually do to how city water rates are actually determined.) The Whole Language framework recognizes that large exploitive contexts have an impact on individual classrooms and relations within them; that increased democracy within individual classrooms must accompany work on understanding and changing larger contexts.

Conclusion

We have tried to show that Whole Language is not a phonics program or a whole word approach. Neither is it a revitalized Language Experience Approach or another round of Open Education. If its newness is not recognized, we fear it will suffer the fate of these two past innovations.

Language Experience was vulgarized to become a collection of flash cards hung on a shower hook. The idea of Open Education was distorted to mean an open pod. Lately we have seen Whole Language misrepresented by a whole word perspective (at a recent conference, there was a booth selling Whole Language pocket charts for sight words). It is already widely equated with a program of component parts explained in old terms that render it "nothing new."

But those who have had the courage to examine old beliefs, who have struggled, collaborated, sought and given support in working with the ideas of Whole Language know the excitement of discovering its newness for themselves. We invite all educators to join in this difficult, exhilarating, empowering work.

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WHAT IS WHOLE LANGUAGE?

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Chairperson, FRA Research and Study Committee

Whole language is a term that has been appearing in the reading and language arts literature with increased regularity in the last two years. In spite of the more frequent appearance of the term, many reading educators are still uncertain about what whole language really is. The purpose of this article is to present a whole language literature review that was completed by the Florida Reading Association's Research and Study Committee. Specifically, the article will: 1) explain the philosophical beliefs of whole language supporters, and 2) describe instructional activities which adhere to the whole language philosophy and are often included in whole language programs.

Philosophical Bases for Whole Language

Advocates for whole language have a philosophy of how all areas of language should be developed. This philosophy is based, in part, on the belief that instruction in the development of reading and writing should draw some parallels with the way speaking and listening are naturally developed by children. When children learn to speak they are surrounded by people that speak and children's early efforts are praised by those around them. Children's speech development progresses at different rates, and for the most part, this seems to be accepted, because undue pressure isn't put on the child to speak perfectly.

Specifically, the learning philosophy of the whole language advocates holds that language should be kept whole rather than being broken into separate parts, such as letters and words. According to their position, when language is broken into parts it is made abstract, thus more difficult (Goodman, 1987). Conversely, when language is kept whole, it is meaningful to the learner. Meaningful language has four primary purposes: 1) functional (signs, recipes); 2) social (letters, notes); 3) informative (newspapers, magazines, texts) and 4) aesthetic (poetry, narrative books, music). When teaching language, an emphasis should be placed on communication rather than mechanics of the language (phonic sounds, parts of speech, and others). Goodman (1987) and Watson & Crowley (1988) proposed that students will independently discover the alphabetic principle when given activities that involve active manipulation of the writing craft. They suggest that as children experiment with expressing themselves through writing and speaking they figure out the phoneme-grapheme correspondence; therefore, direct instruction of letter sounds is not needed. Furthermore, when children experience language as a meaningful whole rather than in bits and pieces and when language is used for a relevant purpose, learning its written form is achieved in a natural manner and in an enjoyable way.

The instructional focus in whole language classrooms is on the language learning process rather than the product. This aspect of the philosophy greatly alters the role of teachers. They become helpers, coaches, and facilitators. Rather than competiveness among peers, cooperation is stressed. Children in whole language classrooms are resource people who serve as consultants and guides to their reading and writing partners. A climate of support pervades the class, and in this nonthreatening environment, students are free to take risks. They can use invented spellings as they write, they can choose to read books about topics that interest them, and they can select the type of writing that fits their purpose at the time: letter, message, poster, poem, list, story, directions or others.

Another important element of the whole language philosophy is that language arts instruction should be integrated and should in-

clude all of the language arts: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Goodman, 1987 & Baumann, 1985). Research has clearly shown that there is a close relationship among listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Loban, 1963). It is proposed that because of their interrelatedness, growth in one area will facilitate growth in the other areas; therefore, as much as possible, instruction should be integrated (Cooper, Warncke, & Shipman, 1988).

Thematic units are used for all or at least part of the curriculum. They can be science units, health units, social studies units, or literature units. All of these four areas may be integrated into a single unit about a certain topic. In addition, math, art, physical education, music, reading, writing, speaking, and listening may be integrated around a specific theme or included with the science, social studies, health and literature units. Units provide a focal point for language use, problem solving, creativeness, motor development, and knowledge development.

Another philosophical belief is that teachers and students should have power in the classroom. Teachers should have autonomy to select the materials, curricula, and instructional methods that meet the needs of the particular students that they are working with at any given time. Furthermore, whole language advocates contend that teachers should be free to reject instructional programs that they judge not to be meeting the needs of their students (Goodman, 1987). Whole language teachers determine students' interests, abilities, and needs, and then use the information in helping to plan the curriculum, identify instructional procedures, and select materials. Together, the teacher and students plan activities that are authentic, appropriate, appealing, and relevant to the topic that is being studied. In addition, students are able to select many of their own activities.

Whole language advocates believe that standardized tests do not adequately measure what is important. They point out that students' knowledge about composition is measured through multiple choice items rather than students' own composition products. Similarly, end-of-unit skill tests measure isolated skills devoid of meaningful sentence context. Thus, without a meaningful context students are deprived of helpful clues that facilitate reading with understanding. In a normal reading situation, children who are weak in one area compensate by using other available clues. Thereby, whole language advocates propose that since reading is more than the sum of its parts, performance on isolated skill tests does not reflect students' reading capability. Unfortunately, such measures of reading or writing performance often serve as guides for classroom instruction.

Children in whole language classrooms may understand and use the skills of language as they read and as they spell when writing, but they may not be familiar with the symbol system used on tests. Thus, the real purpose or relevancy of the language is obscured. Whole language proponents do feel that it is important for teachers to be informed about their students' performance, but there is no need to compare them to each other or to a standard score as is done with standardized achievement tests. Instead, they propose that every instructional situation may provide an opportunity for whole language teachers to assess their students' performance (Watson & Crowley, 1988).

The teaching of separate reading skills is another practice that is inconsistent with whole language philosophy. Goodman (1987) stated that learning is made meaningless and abstract when separated into bits. Equally as emphatic, Watson & Crowley (1988) stated that children should never be asked to do phonic drills in which their attention is focused on small and abstract units of language. Furthermore, students should not be asked to read flash cards of words that are out of the situational context. With these activities students cannot draw on past pragmatic information, thus it is inconsistent with the way language is used and learned in real situations (Watson & Crowley, 1988).

Use of a basal program and other language arts texts as the primary guide for instruction is another practice that is inconsistent with

whole language philosophy. With basal text as the guiding force, teachers and students lose the power of self-selection of activities. In addition, many of the activities in the basal program and other language arts texts defy the whole language principles of keeping learning meaningful, whole, relevant, integrated, and fun.

Whole Language Activities

The activities used for whole language programs vary from one classroom to another, because teachers have autonomy to select and develop the instructional methods and materials used in their classrooms. Selection of activities is guided by students' interests, students' needs, and curriculum content appropriate for the grade level. The recommended activities that follow are only suggestions and are not a comprehensive list. Obviously, additional activities may be used and those provided may be varied to meet the needs of children at various grade levels and with different interests. The particular set of activities have been selected because they cover all four language arts (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and they adhere to the criteria of 1) providing for language instruction as a meaningful whole and 2) enabling the integration of the language arts.

Speaking and Listening Activities

Oral language uses oral symbols and involves speaking and listening. The oral language base enables students to develop the ability to use written symbols for reading and writing (Cooper, et al., 1988). Speaking and listening activities play an important role in whole language classrooms at all levels.

Warm Ups. Poems, songs, chants, raps, fingerplays, jump rope rhymes, group language experience stories, class or school cheers, and pattern stories are put on charts in print for all students to see. They are recited at the beginning of the day or during the two to five minutes of free time just before lunch, physical education, music, or at the end of the day (Bolte, 1987). The whole class, trios, duos, or individuals may read the warm up or parts may be assigned as in choral reading. The children may copy the text in personal books or the group may put the selection in a class book of poetry or prose, a jump rope rhyme book, or a book of raps (Watson, 1988).

Shared Book Experiences. Students engage in shared book experiences which involve the whole class in reading a book with print large enough for everyone to see. The procedure outlined by Holdaway (1979) involves the following steps: 1) The teacher introduces the book by telling students a little about it. 2) S/he asks students to predict what the selection will be about. 3) The teacher reads the selection to the students, showing the illustrations and pointing to the text (from top to bottom and from left to right) as s/he reads. 4) The teacher may stop periodically to encourage students to tell what they think will happen next in the story. 5) As the text is reread, students are encouraged to read along with the teacher. 6) On subsequent readings, individuals or pairs may volunteer to read a page. 7) The book is read together each day for a week. For beginning or remedial readers, predictable stories are often selected because the repetition of vocabulary makes them easier to read and their rhythm and rhyme are usually appealing to children.

Reporting and Sharing. Informal sharing and reporting to other class members enables all to be informed about what a group has accomplished while working on a special research project or experiment that is a part of a thematic unit. Students may tell about a favorite book that was read and attempt to persuade others to read it. Reporting might also involve a demonstration of how to do something. Speaking is an area that is often neglected in classrooms; however, it is important for children to have an opportunity to present information with clear projection, with a focus on audience interest, and with an awareness of purpose. Children may be encouraged to share personal news or interesting articles on a regular basis. To increase the amount of participation in a given time frame and to diminish the discomfort some students may have for presenting to a large class, students may be put

into groups of five or six for sharing or reporting.

Discussion/Brainstorming. In whole language programs, discussions or brainstorming play an important part in learning. Through discussions, both oral language and listening are enhanced. Discussions may involve a number of activities.

Children's literature groups may be formed for discussions. The teacher briefly introduces several children's books and asks students to indicate their first and second preferences. Based on these choices, students are put into groups of five or six individuals who have selected the same book. Big books may be used or all group members may have their own regular size copy; therefore, the group size may vary depending on the number of copies available for a given selection. Students may read a book individually, in unison, or use a modified cloze procedure. With the cloze procedure a student reads aloud while the others follow along. Intermittently, the reader pauses to let the other group members read a word. After the book is read the group discusses it.

Discussion and brainstorming are also an important part of the problem solving used with experiments or projects. Students make predictions about what will happen or hypothesize why something occurred. Probing questions foster thinking on the part of students. As a new science, social studies or health unit is introduced, students brainstorm what they already know about the topic. These ideas are put on the chalkboard, chart paper or sentence strips and categorized. As students acquire information about the topic, ideas are evaluated for accuracy and appropriateness.

Discussions or brainstorming are also an important part of the prewriting phase of written composition. Prior to writing about a specific topic, the teacher elicits from students information about the topic and/or experiences related to the topic. This information is available for students as they compose their stories. Brainstorming sessions are usually started by the teacher asking open-ended questions such as, "What do we think we know about birds?"

Daily Oral and Silent Reading

Children's literature plays an important role in the whole language classroom where children spend more time engaged in oral and silent reading and less time completing skill sheets and workbook exercises. Children's literature selections provide a greater source of the reading materials than basal texts. Thematic units are bolstered by collections of trade books or any other literature selections related to the topic. The classroom is "littered with literacy" that makes sense and appeals to the students who live in the classroom (cited in Watson & Crowley, 1988). There are resource books, magazines, newspapers, maps and globes, greeting cards, travel brochures, government documents, posters, restaurant menus, television schedules, baseball cards, cartoons, bumper stickers, banners, comic books, sheet music, cookbooks, letters, messages, and a collection of professionally authored and student authored books that cover a range of genres (poetry, biographies, traditional literature, fantasy, realistic fiction) and topics.

Small group assignments may center around book baskets comprised of a set of books, newspaper articles, or students own "published" books. The collection may be about the same topic (birds, farm animals, electricity, sports) or the same type of book (poetry books, humorous books or books by the same author). Directions for how the books are to be used are included in the basket. Examples of these directions are as follows: 1) Select and prepare a feature analysis (like and unlike attributes) chart for ten birds found in the area; 2) select five favorite poems, reread them several times and prepare to share them with the rest of the class; 3) discuss how the main characters in each book are alike and how they are different.

Sustained silent reading (SSR) is usually scheduled as a part of the daily routine. The amount of designated time should vary according to the grade level of the group. Students are encouraged to try to independently determine how to pronounce unknown words by reading to the end of sentences. They are also encouraged to monitor their reading by asking, "Does that make sense?" Individual conferences with students about their books enables teachers to assess students' comprehension and determine their reading interests. Small group book talks, where students share their books with others, is an effective way to encourage reading. Posters, drawings, and brief book advertisements prepared by students also stimulate interest in reading and provide guidance for selection of books to read during the SSR time.

Repetition is one key to success in whole language classrooms. With many repetitions the words become "embedded in the student's mind" (Goodman, 1987). This repetition may involve 1) reading predictable or pattern stories over again because of the rhythm of the language and/or the appeal in the story; 2) repeatedly reading a selection such as a poem, part in a play or a young children's book so that it can be read to a group with fluency; and 3) extensive reading which gives repeated exposure to vocabulary in context of many books.

Unison reading or readalong at a listening center using taped stories is another means of providing oral reading practice. Children listen individually (usually with headsets) to tape-recorded stories as they follow along in the written text. They are encouraged to listen to the story over and over until they feel they can read the story to their teacher or to an older student tutor. Commercial booktapes are expensive, so teachers may make their own or solicit assistance from parents or older students who read with good expression.

Pair reading in which two students take turns reading to each other is another pleasurable way for students to practice oral reading and improve automaticity while reading. The pairs may be comprised of peers in the same class or one younger student and a student from a higher grade level. This procedure fosters the cooperative attitude that prevails in whole language classrooms.

Whole language teachers read to their students or tell them stories every day. It is considered as essential part of the curriculum. In Bolte's (1987) whole language classroom, a time was also set aside each day for "old favorites." Students took turns selecting a book the teacher had read earlier to the class and it was read by the teacher at the start of the school day.

Daily Writing

Writing plays a major role in the whole language classroom. Busch & Jenkins (1982) recommended that sustained writing time patterned after SSR time should be provided each day. Students write about anything they want and corrections are not made by the teacher.

Journal writing is prominent in whole language classrooms. Students write in their logs and are directed to spell words the best they can. In the journals of younger students, some invented spellings are expected.

In some classrooms, dialogue journals are used to promote reading and writing. This type of journal helps to achieve the integration of reading and writing since the teacher responds to the students' entries. The students start a dialogue by writing the first entry. (With very young children who have difficulty beginning the dialogue, the teacher may need to write the first entry). The teacher writes a response to the student's entry immediately after on the journal page. For very young children it may be necessary for students to read their entries to the teacher since they aren't always decipherable. Teacher responses should be made then and read to the child. When the teacher observes that the student has used an invented spelling for a word or has made an error in punctuation or capitalization, rather than correcting the child, a correct spelling of the misspelled word is included in the response. Correct punctuation and use of capitalization is also modeled in the response (Bode, 1988).

Language experience stories are often included in whole language programs; however, they should be in addition to, rather than in

place of students' own writing. The experiences may relate to the thematic unit that is being taught or to another experience such as an appealing book, an object, a poster, a field trip, an exploration around the school, an experiment, a project or many other activities that stimulate group discussion leading to group composition. It is recommended that the development of a language experience story follow the same writing process recommended for children's individual composition: prewriting, composition, editing, revision and publication (Graves, 1983).

A variety of writing activities are completed in the whole language program covering the informative, functional, social and aesthetic purposes for writing. Charts, poems, short stories, posters, books, plays, directions, lists, journals, advertisements, reports, letters and class newsletters are examples of writing activities that may occur. In keeping with the whole language philosophy, students should be given choices about topics and allowed to select the writing task. A number of writing choices may be related to the children's books or other selections read for pleasure or the thematic unit being studied.

With younger students, successful writing experiences may be assured by using predictable or pattern books. The story pattern is used with only a few words substituted. Instead of "Brown Bear. Brown Bear, What do you See?" (Martin, 1983) the students may substitute another animal, such as, "Red Rooster, Red Rooster, What do you Hear?"

Discussion and Recommendation

Many teachers are already doing many whole language activities; however, they are not always adhering strictly to the whole language philosophy. There are a number of reasons for this: 1) They have felt the need to have the support of a basal program (controlled vocabulary, comprehension questions to guide reading and systematic skills sequence); 2) they have felt uncomfortable in implementing a whole language program that, in its purist form, is on the opposite end of the philosophical continuum from the traditional basal program; 3) they have observed that some of the tenets of whole language conflict with effective teacher research that supports direct instruction; 4) they have felt uncomfortable in completely abandoning skill instruction; and 5) finally, they have been concerned that the superiority of whole language programs as compared to conventional programs has not been adequately determined with experimental or quasi-experimental research.

Yet, a growing number of teachers and school systems believe that many aspects of the whole language philosophy are sound. They have begun to adjust their programs and are incorporating many whole language activities similar to the ones described in this article.

Above kindergarten level emergence into a whole language program often involves direct instruction of only the most important reading and language arts skills. With this instruction whole-to-part skill development rather than part-to whole is used. Written composition generated through the process model provides a strong oral-writing-reading connection. Reading material in the basal text is supplemented with literature selections and a greater emphasis is placed on children reading rather than completing skill sheets and workbook skill exercises. In these emergent whole language programs, teachers are assuming greater control of the decision-making within their own classes.

A slow immersion into whole language instruction rather than a drastic change is probably wise. The decision about whether to ever implement a purist whole language program will certainly be guided by the information gained as the program is implemented and from experimental research findings which show the effectiveness of such programs.

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Appendix C

NIE/Dropout Prevention Workshop

July 26, 1988

June 30, 1988

(to teachers)

We are delighted that you will be participating in the study, AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF NEWSPAPER-BASED INSTRUCTION ON READING COMPREHENSION IN AN AT-RISK SECONDARY LEVEL POPULATION, which has been funded by the Knight Foundation. We are looking forward to working with you as we carry out this interagency project with 8th-12th grade students in Leon County's middle and secondary schools this coming school year.

The next phase of implementing the project in your school will be a training day for pilot teachers on Tuesday, July 26, 1988, at the Killearn Country Club, 8:30 a.m. through 3:00 p.m. We would like for you to be our guest at a noon luncheon, and a stipend of $65.00 will be paid to each participating teacher for the day.

We believe that this project, designed to complement the ongoing curriculum, has the potential to reduce the dropout rate in the target population. We also know that your leadership will be invaluable to us as we all work together to make this project a success. Should you have suggestions and/or questions related to the project or the training day, please feel free to telephone either me or Mary Hafner, Project Coordinator, at 644-5458. We look forward to this opportunity to work with you and your students during 1988-89.

Sincerely,

Barbara C. Palmer
Principal Investigator

BCP:mh

enclosures: map, Killearn Country Club
RSVP form and return envelope

Registration Form

for

NIE/DROPOUT PREVENTION WORKSHOP

Killearn Country Club
July 26, 1988

Please return this form in the attached self-addressed, stamped envelope no later than July 15, 1988.

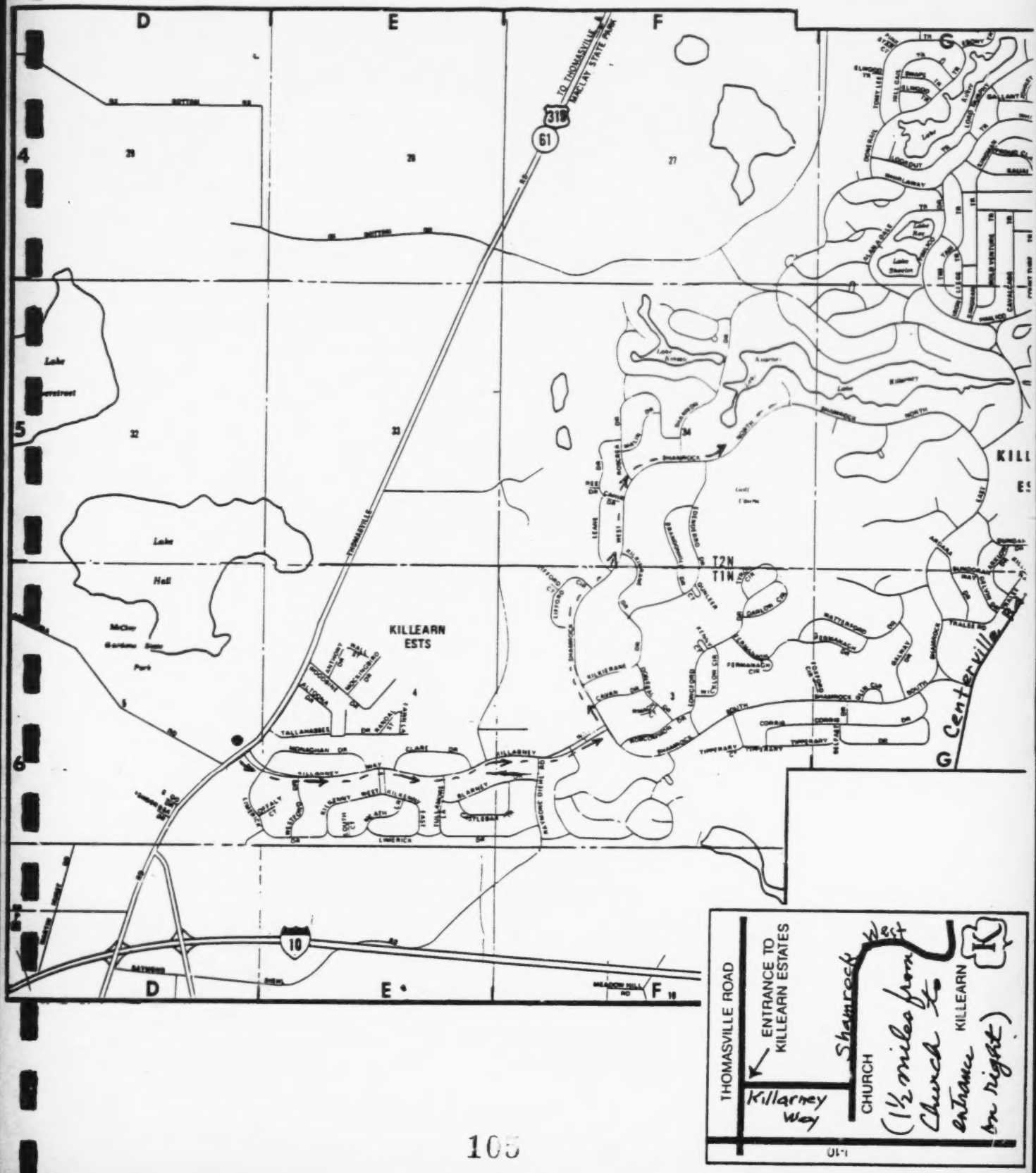
Name_____ Phone_____

____ I will be attending the NIE/Dropout Prevention Workshop on July 26, 1988.

____ Please reserve a luncheon place for me on that day.

____ I will not be able to join the group at lunch.

MAP - Showing way to Killearn Country Club
(Ample free parking is available)



June 30, 1988

(to workshop guests)

A NIE/Dropout Prevention Workshop is planned for July 26, 1988, to implement the next phase of the study, AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECTS OF NEWSPAPER-BASED INSTRUCTION ON READING COMPREHENSION IN AN AT-RISK SECONDARY LEVEL POPULATION, which was funded by the Knight Foundation earlier this year. During the workshop, project staff members from the Tallahassee Democrat, the Leon County Schools, the Florida Department of Education, and The Florida State University will work together with Leon County's pilot teachers in preparation for beginning the study with middle and secondary students this fall.

We would like to invite you to be our guest at the noon luncheon, which will be held in the Oak View Room of the Killearn Country Club. A copy of the day's agenda is enclosed for your information. If you have any questions, telephone either Barbara C. Palmer or Mary Hafner at 644-5458. Please return the enclosed RSVP form no later than July 15, 1988. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Barbara C. Palmer
Principal Investigator

BCP:mh

enclosures

RSVP Form for lunch at the NIE/DROPOUT PREVENTION WORKSHOP

Killearn Country Club, 12:00 noon, July 26, 1988

Please return this form to Barbara C. Palmer or Mary Hafner, 115 Stone Building, The Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306, no later than July 15, 1988.

Name_____ Phone_____

_____ Please reserve a luncheon place for me on July 26.

_____ I will not be able to join the group at lunch.

AGENDA

NIE/DROPOUT PREVENTION WORKSHOP

July 26, 1988
Killearn Country Club
Tallahassee, Florida

Registration and Coffee, *The Canopy Room*		8:30 - 9:00 a.m.
Welcome and Introductions	Barbara C. Palmer	9:00 - 9:05 a.m.
Newspaper Activity	Laurie P. Doyle	9:05 - 9:30 a.m.
Knight Foundation Project Overview	Barbara C. Palmer	9:30 - 9:45 a.m.
Writing Component of Project	Barbara Shapley	9:45 - 10:00 a.m.
NIE/Dropout Prevention Implementation	Laurie P. Doyle and Chris Kite	10:00 - 11:45 a.m.
Luncheon, *The Oak View Room*		12:00 - 1:15 p.m.
Whole Language and The Newspaper	Pauline Sauls and Barbara Shapley	1:30 - 2:15 p.m.
Developing Metacognitive Awareness through Reading and Writing	Barbara C. Palmer	2:15 - 2:30 p.m.
Project Questions	Barbara C. Palmer	2:30 - 2:45 p.m.
Wrap-up	Mary L. Hafner	2:45 - 3:00 p.m.

Materials Distributed to all Pilot Teachers at NIE/Dropout Prevention Workshop

Project Success - Newspaper activities geared to "at-risk" students in middle grades. Florida Newspaper in Education Coordinators.

Using the Newspaper to Reinforce Communication Skills, Rev. Edition. Florida Newspaper in Education Coordinators, Inc., 1983.

Classroom Va-voom! Newspaper Activities. Florida Newspapers in Education Coordinators, 1985.

Writing - Standards of Excellence Newspaper Activities. Florida Newspaper in Education Coordinators, Inc., 1987.

Knowledge in Bloom - Newspaper activities keyed to Bloom's taxonomy. Florida Newspaper in Education Coordinators, Inc.

Newspapers and Exploring the Dimensions of Thinking. Garrett and Kapinus. West Palm Beach, FL: The Palm Beach Post.

Twenty-Nine Ways to Use the Newspaper (copy on following page)

TWENTY-NINE WAYS TO USE THE NEWSPAPER

1. Choose a story from the newspaper. Draw a red line under each noun. Draw a blue line under each verb. Draw a green line under each adjective, etc.

2. Choose a story from the newspaper. Circle the transitional words or phrases. Words like *therefore, while, but, however,* and phrases such as *on the other hand, in the meantime, etc.*

3. Choose a sports story. Rewrite the story using formal English for all the unique sports terms. What does this do to the story?

4. Categorize one week's headline news stories into subject areas. What area furnished the most excitement this week? (science, music, space, accidents, politics, war)

5. Separate headlines from stories and ask students to test their skill at matching titles to stories. Check the answer key to see how well they did.

6. Separate headlines from stories and ask students to write headlines, then match their attempts with the original ones.

7. Separate pictures from captions and attempt to match. Check with key.

8. Using the articles on the front page, write a television news broadcast script. Using the ads, write commercials to sponsor your news program.

9. Check all advertisements of cars in this issue. Which company offers the most benefits on a trade-in? Do these benefits sound reasonable or an advertisement come-on? Explain your answer.

10. Study the stock market reports to answer these questions:

    a. Jerry had 20 shares of T & T stock. Susan had 20 shares of Bell Telephone. Tom owned 20 shares of Radio Corporation of America. All three stocks advanced this week and our owners sold. If they all had the same original investment, which made more money this week?

    b. According to the television news report, stocks fell 2.98 today. What three stocks bore the main thrust of this loss?

    c. For the last three weeks, American Mobile Home Corporation stock has advanced ½ to 1 percent. If this trend continues, what will be the price of this stock at the end of a ten-day period?

11. Choose an editorial and rewrite it as it might have been written in pioneer days, during World War I, or during any period you're studying in history class this week.

12. Choose your favorite comic strip. Paste it to a tagboard and cover with contact paper. Separate it into the segments and make an answer key. Put all of this into an envelope on which you write directions for the task of sequencing and add it to your sequence file. Practice on some of the story comics already in the file.

13. Select five new words from the latest issue of the paper. Find out all you can about these new terms and rewrite the sentences where you find them using synonyms. Put the new words into your card file. If they are interesting, you might want to share with a friend or prepare to teach one to the class.

14. Make a newspaper using modern day features of what it might be like to a world with no electricity and/or no gasoline. All features and articles must follow a format as though we had neither.

15. Analyze advertisement appeal. Go through your favorite ads and circle words which would help sell the merchandise. Then place these words under categories which determine to whom and for what emotions the advertisers are reaching.

16. Speed reading: Study the front page for three minutes. Then see how many facts you can remember. Daily practice for six weeks will amaze you.

17. Choose some controversial issue of the day and write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

18. Recall game: Class divides into two teams. All students study the paper for a designated time. Then one team acts as experts--they ask the questions. For each question they can think of, they get one point for their team. For each question team 2 can answer, they get a point. If team 2 fails to answer, the question reverts over to team 1, who must answer or lose the point. Skills practiced in this game are relevant to most reading tasks, and students thoroughly enjoy the challenge. They can also see their own progress.

19. Rewrite four want ads using synonyms for all nouns.

20. Rewrite four want ads as a creative story.

21. Rewrite four want ads as they might have been written in 1820, 1920, or 1930.

22. Study the want ads--both buying and selling. Write an ad for something you want to buy and one for something you want to sell.

23. Stage a dramatic incident which students view. Have them use the format of who, what, where, and when, and write their version of what happened as they might do it for a newspaper. Let them compare stories. They'll be amazed at the differences in what they saw.

24. Use the inquiry technique. The teacher gives the class a headline. Students interview her to get the information for their news story. To write the article they can use only the information they get from direct questioning. The first time they won't get much, but they'll learn.
    Examples of headlines: a. Three Teenagers Find Car Submerged in Lake
    b. Highway Commission Says School Building Must Go

25. Give students a problem situation and ask them to skim rapidly for the solution as offered in some newspaper.
    Example: You need a hearing test but do not have money to pay for it. Is there any help in your community?

26. Choose one article from the editorial section of the paper and pick the five most important words in the selection. Explain your choice.

27. Make who, when, where, and what columns and fill in from five stories of the day. This practices note-taking skills and finding details.

28. Work the daily crossword puzzles, or if you prefer, work up an original puzzle and submit it to the editors of your local paper.

29. Visit a newspaper plant. Interview people at work on different tasks, if permissible. Write up the interviews as you would for publication.

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION FORM
NIE/DROPOUT PREVENTION WORKSHOP

July 26, 1988

ITEM	RATING SCALE *(Please circle one number for each item)*
1. To what extent were you familiar with the content presented in the workshop?	1 2 3 4 5 *(Not at all)* *(Totally)*
2. Overall, you considered this workshop to be	1 2 3 4 5 *(Poor)* *(Excellent)*
3. In your opinion, the goals of the workshop were	1 2 3 4 5 *(Not achieved)* *(Fully achieved)*
4. Sufficient time was alotted to cover the various topics	1 2 3 4 5 *(Too little or too much time)* *(Ideal amount of time)*
5. Participants were involved in the process and participant input was encouraged throughout the workshop	1 2 3 4 5 *(Seldom)* *(Often)*

6. For future planning purposes, please list any changes in the workshop that you would recommend to improve its quality.

The Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-4065

Department of Childhood Education
College of Education
Degree Programs:
Early Childhood Education
Elementary Education
Reading and Language Arts Education
Science Education

August 8, 1988

(to teachers)

Thank you so much for agreeing to serve in the "new" and additional role of lead teacher for the pilot teachers in your school who will be participating in the Knight Foundation Project. Your position as liaison will greatly facilitate carrying out this project during the school year; being able to contact you to relay information to the participating teachers and to get feedback from them, and vice versa, will provide the ideal communication vehicle.

Please express our appreciation to all the teachers who joined us on July 26th for the NIE/Dropout Prevention Workshop. As we progressed through the day's agenda, the project staff became more aware than ever of the dynamic, enthusiastic, and general excellence of our "volunteer" pilot teachers. There is no doubt in our minds about the high quality of instruction that will be provided by these teachers during the treatment phase of this research. Their expertise and energy will be invaluable to the overall success of the project.

Our project timetable calls for several tasks that need to be completed as early in the school year as possible; therefore, we need your assistance now in ascertaining the following:

1. Each pilot teacher's class schedule with approximate number of students enrolled in each class (forms are enclosed for gathering this information). Note: Some teachers will be teaching classes other than those targeted for the research project; it will not be necessary to list those on this form. The project staff will then assign class sections as to those that will be control classes (no newspapers used for instruction), passive experimental classes (newspapers available in the room but no direct use for instruction), and active experimental classes (newspapers are used for instruction, and students are encouraged to take the newspapers home).

After the class section research assignments are made, we will work with the Tallahassee Democrat to schedule newspaper deliveries.

Please also gather forms for any teachers who will be participating as pilot teachers but who were unable to attend the July 26th workshop. A make-up training session early in the school year is being planned for these teachers; details for the make-up session will be forthcoming.

2. We are in the process of getting the one-page student questionnaires printed (this form was presented on July 26) to gather student data not available on Leon County's computer system. As soon as we have an approximate number of students from each school, we will send the forms to you and ask that these short questionnaires be completed and returned to us as soon as possible.

3. We hope to begin our reading (vocabulary and comprehension) pretesting on Wednesday, September 7. Do you feel it would be better to test period-by-period or in a "large" one-sitting group? We will be contacting you to schedule times for this testing.

In addition to the above tasks, we have this question for you as lead teacher: Do your pilot teachers think we need a training session directed at understanding how to integrate newspaper information with performance standards? A sample lesson plan from Barbara Shapley is forthcoming. Please jot down your response to this question on the back of your copy of the enclosed enrollment information form before returning it.

Thank you very much for your attention and response to these tasks to ensure getting the treatment phase of the project off to a smooth and successful start. Please return the enclosed forms so that they reach us no later than August 29. Should you have suggestions and/or questions related to the project, please feel free to telephone either of us at 644-5458. We are looking forward to working with you further in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Barbara C. Palmer
Principal Investigator

Mary L. Hafner
Project Coordinator

enclosures

Appendix D

Teacher Questionnaire

The 17 teachers in this study reported their educational background by indicating their highest degree earned. These data are summarized in the table below.

Table D-1

Educational Background/Highest Degree(s)

	Bachelor	Master's	Specialist	Doctoral	Total
Middle School	4	1	0	0	5
Secondary School	8	2	1	1	12
Total	12	3	1	1	17

Seventeen teachers had an average of 14.2 years' teaching experience with a range of 2-29 years. The middle school teachers had an average of 10.8 years' teaching experience, with a range of 2-18 years, and a median of 12. The secondary school teachers had an average of 15.7 years' teaching experience, with a range of 2 to 29 years, and a median of 16.5. The table that follows shows these data.

Table D-2

Number of Years' Teaching Experience

	0-5	6-10	11-15	16+	Total
Middle School	1	1	2	1	5
Secondary School	3	0	2	7	12
Total	4	1	4	8	17

When asked the question, "Have you had any previous training in the use of newspapers in the classroom?" 9 teachers indicated they had training prior to this study and 8 teachers indicated no previous training.

Table D-3

Previous Training in the Use of Newspapers in the Classroom

	Yes	No	Total
Middle School	2	3	5
Secondary School	7	5	12
Total	9	8	17

The teachers' experience in using newspapers in the classroom varied. Only 1 of the 5 middle school teachers had used newspapers in the classroom prior to this study. Eight secondary school teachers had used newspapers in the classroom previously while 4 had not used newspapers. The table that follows indicates this.

Table D-4

Use of Newspapers in the Classroom Prior to this Study

	Yes	No	Total
Middle School	1	4	5
Secondary School	8	4	12
Total	9	8	17

Of the 17 teachers in this study, 12 reported previous training in writing, 4 at the middle school level and 8 at the secondary level.

Table D-5

Previous Training in Writing

	Yes	No	Total
Middle School	4	1	5
Secondary School	8	4	12
Total	12	5	17

Interest in Visiting the Tallahassee Democrat

When asked the question, "Would you be interested in visiting the Tallahassee Democrat, touring the facility, and meeting with editors and reporters to learn more about the newspaper?" 11 of the 17 teachers indicated *Yes*, 5 answered *Undecided*, and 1 teacher did not respond. The visit took place at the Tallahassee Democrat on January 19, 1989.

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE date of administration: 07/26/88

(Please print)

Name_____ SS#_____

School_____ Position_____

Home address_____
street

_____
city state zip

Home phone_____ Work phone_____

Educational background *(Please check one or more)*

Degree(s): Bachelor_____ Master's_____

Specialist_____ Doctorate_____

Other_____

Teaching experience

Total number of years' teaching experience_____

Have you had any previous training in the use of newspapers in the classroom?

Yes_____ No_____

Are you presently using the newspaper in your classroom?

Yes_____ No_____

Would you be interested in visiting the Tallahassee Democrat, touring the facility and meeting with editors and reporters to learn more about the newspaper (stipend available)?

Yes_____ No_____ Undecided_____

Have you had any previous writing workshops or training? Yes____ No____

Grade(s) you will teach in 1988-89. *Please circle one or more.*

8 9 10 11 12 Other_____

How many sections of each grade will you teach?

Grade 8_____ Grade 10_____ Grade 12_____

Grade 9_____ Grade 11_____ Other_____

Table D-6

Teacher Questionnaire Data Summary

	Sex	Educ.	Years' Tchng. Exp.	Training to use NIE	Using NIE Prior to Study	Training in Writing	Visit to Tallahassee Democrat
Middle Schools							
Teacher 1	F	B	12	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Teacher 2	F	B	2	No	No	Yes	Yes
Teacher 3	F	B	7	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Teacher 4	F	M	18	No	No	No	Undecided
Teacher 5	F	B	15	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Secondary Schools							
Teacher 1	M	B	20	No	No	No	Yes
Teacher 2	F	B	16	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Teacher 3	F	B	20	Yes	No	No response	Yes
Teacher 4	F	B	29	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Teacher 5	F	B	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	No response
Teacher 6	F	M	15	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Teacher 7	F	B	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	Undecided
Teacher 8	F	M	17	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Teacher 9	F	B	14	Yes	Yes	Yes	Undecided
Teacher 10	F	S	5	No	Yes	No	Yes
Teacher 11	F	D	25	No	No	No	Undecided
Teacher 12	F	B	20	Yes	No	Yes	Undecided

Appendix E

Student Questionnaire

Note to teacher: Please read to your students.

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

DATE _____ SCHOOL _____

TEACHER _____ CLASS PERIOD: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(Please circle one)

NAME OF STUDENT _____ Male___ or Female___

DATE OF BIRTH _____ GRADE _____

1. How many children are there in your family? _____

2. What is your birth order in your family? Check (✓) only one.

   1st___ 2nd___ 3rd___ 4th___ 5th___ 6th___ 7th___ 8th___ 9th___

   other_____

3. Do you speak a language other than English? Yes___ No___

   If "yes," what language other than English? _____

   Which language do you speak better? _____

4. Use a check mark (✓) to answer the following. Check one or more.

   Did your mother complete elementary school?____ middle school____

   high school____ vocational school____ college_____

   military service____ other_____

   Did your father complete elementary school?____ middle school____

   high school____ vocational school____ college____

   military service____ other_____

5. Have you used newspapers in any of your classes in school? Yes___ No___

   If "yes," what class or classes?_____

6. For the past five years, who have you lived with most of the time?

   mother and father____ mother only____ father only____

   both grandparents____ grandparent only____

   other_____

Appendix F

Writing Performance Component

THE GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TESTING SERVICE
OF THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION
The Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials

September 15, 1988

Barbara C. Palmer
Professor, Reading Education
College of Education
The Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4065

Dear Dr. Palmer:

I am pleased to grant you permission, as requested, to use the three GED essay topics in the Official GED Practice Tests and The Official Teacher's Guide to the Tests of General Educational Development in the study outlined in your letter of August 31, 1988. This permission is limited to the study outlined in your letter and is granted without fee. Please note the source of the essay topics and acknowledge our permission in any written materials associated with the study.

I hope that the use of these topics and our grading procedure will contribute materially to the study. We look forward to receiving a copy of any reports.

Sincerely,

Douglas R. Whitney

Douglas R. Whitney
Director

One Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C. 20036-1163 (202) 939-9490

The Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-4065

Department of Childhood Education
College of Education
Degree Programs:
Early Childhood Education
Elementary Education
Reading and Language Arts Education
Science Education

August 31, 1988

Dr. Doug Whitney
GED Testing Service
One Dupont Circle, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Dr. Whitney:

It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to talk with you earlier today about the literacy grant that has been awarded to the Florida State University by the Knight Foundation. For your information, please find enclosed a one-page summary of that project.

In addition to measuring reading gains of the at-risk students in this study, writing gains will also be addressed. As we discussed, your GED model for essay writing would be ideal for our purposes, particularly the holistic grading process.

I am hereby requesting permission to use for research purposes the three essay topics that we discussed; i.e., the one from the official teacher's guide and one from each of the official practice tests (AA and BB). By using your research as our foundation, we will be confident that our topics are the best possible choices for the subjects in our recently funded study.

It was especially informative for me to talk with you. We in Florida look forward to opportunities to work with you and the members of your staff. Again, many thanks for your encouragement and assistance.

Sincerely,

Barbara C. Palmer
Professor, Reading Education

BCP:mh
enclosure
cc: Pamela A. Mason
Florida GED Coordinator

KNIGHT FOUNDATION AWARDS LITERACY GRANT
TO FSU'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Illiteracy is no longer merely a problem; it has become a social and economic disaster. It is widespread and not limited to any one region, ethnic group, or socioeconomic class. Considered a major contributing factor toward the dropout crisis in high schools across the nation, it is also correlated with poverty, unemployment, and crime.

To address educational problems associated with illiteracy, the Knight Foundation has awarded the Florida State University's College of Education a grant for an experimental study, "An Investigation of the Effects of Newspaper-Based Instruction on Reading Comprehension in an At-Risk Secondary Level Population." Barbara C. Palmer, Professor of Reading Education, will serve as Principal Investigator for the research study. Building on previous research with newspapers in education, and incorporating a whole language approach to instruction, this pilot project will be directed at improving various aspects of reading comprehension. The primary intent of this project is to reduce significantly the dropout rate in the target population of students in Leon County Schools through an innovative approach to language and literacy instruction that utilizes the real-world context of the newspaper.

Initially conceptualized by Barbara Shapley, a parent, a former Leon County English Teacher, and presently the Florida Department of Education's Newspapers in Education (NIE) Program Specialist, this interagency project also has representatives from the Tallahassee Democrat, the Leon County Schools, and the Florida State University. In addition to Barbara Shapley and Barbara C. Palmer, the core project team presently includes the following: Jean Buford (Community Relations Manager, Tallahassee Democrat), Laurie Doyle (NIE Coordinator, Tallahassee Democrat), Carol Sanfilippo (Curriculum Improvement Team Language Arts Resource Teacher, Leon County Schools), and Mary L. Hafner (Project Coordinator, Florida State University.) The project staff are working closely with Bill Piotrowski (Director of Student Information/Testing, Research, and Evaluation, Leon County Schools) to get the recently funded study underway.

WRITING SAMPLE I

DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

PLEASE read before administering Writing Sample I

1. Make sure the student completes the student box before starting the 45-minute timed test.
2. Read aloud the instructions to students.
3. Read aloud the essay topic.
4. Make sure students have a full 45-minute period for writing.
5. Collect all writing samples and be sure that the teacher's box is complete on each.

THANK YOU for your assistance with this assignment.

KNIGHT FOUNDATION PROJECT -- Essay Sample #1/September, 1988

INSTRUCTIONS

This is an activity to find out how well you write. You are asked to write an essay that explains something or presents an opinion on an issue. In preparing your essay, you should take the following steps:

1. Read carefully the directions and essay topic given below.

2. Plan your essay carefully before you write.

3. You may wish to use the attached scratch paper to make any notes.

4. Write your essay on the lined pages of the separate answer sheet.

5. Read carefully what you have written and make any changes that will improve your writing.

6. Check your paragraphs, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage; and make any necessary corrections.

You will have 45 minutes to write on the topic below. Write legibly and use a ballpoint pen. Write your essay on the lined pages of the separate answer sheet. The notes you make on scratch paper are for your use only.

YOUR ESSAY TOPIC:

The automobile has certainly been responsible for many changes in the United States. Some of these changes have improved our lives and some have made life more difficult or unpleasant.

Write a composition of about 200 words describing the effect of the automobile on modern life. You may describe the positive effects, the negative effects, or both. Be specific, and use examples to support your view.

WRITING SAMPLE I

Last Name, First Name

Continue your essay on next page

USE A BALL POINT PEN TO WRITE YOUR ESSAY

PLEASE read the directions below before administering Writing Sample II (during the week of Jan. 30 - Feb. 3.

WRITING SAMPLE II

DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. Make sure each student completes the student box before starting the 45-minute timed test.
2. Read aloud the instructions to students.
3. Read aloud the essay topic.
4. Make sure students have a full 45-minute period for writing.
5. Collect all writing samples and be sure that the teacher's box is complete on each.

THANK YOU for your assistance with this assignment.
The completed writing essays will be picked up on February 6, 1989.

KNIGHT FOUNDATION PROJECT -- Writing Sample II -- January/February, 1989

Instructions

This is an activity to find out how well you write. You are asked to write an essay that explains something or presents an opinion on an issue. In preparing your essay, you should take the following steps:

1. Read carefully the directions and essay topic given below.
2. Plan your essay carefully before you write.
3. You may wish to use the attached scratch paper to make any notes.
4. Write your essay on the lined pages of the separate answer sheet.
5. Read carefully what you have written and make any changes that will improve your writing.
6. Check your paragraphs, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage; and make any necessary corrections.

You will have 45 minutes to write on the topic below. Write legibly and use a ballpoint pen. Write your essay on the lined pages of the separate answer sheet. The notes you make on scratch paper are for your use only.

YOUR ESSAY TOPIC:

In our society today, we use many inventions. Some of these inventions are helpful, and some of them just seem to make life more troublesome.

Identify an invention that is particularly useful or especially troublesome to you. Write a composition of about 200 words explaining why you feel this invention is useful or troublesome. Provide reasons and examples to support your view.

To be completed by teacher:

Name of Teacher_____ Group *(check only one)*: A____ P____ C____

To be completed by student:

Name_____ Class Period_____ Date_____
Last name, First name

WRITING SAMPLE II

Continue your essay on next page

USE A BALL POINT PEN TO WRITE YOUR ESSAY

PLEASE read the directions below before administering Writing Sample III (on April 4, 5, or 6)

WRITING SAMPLE III

DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. Make sure each student completes the student box before starting the 45-minute timed test.
2. Read aloud the instructions to students.
3. Read aloud the essay topic.
4. Make sure students have a full 45-minute period for writing.
5. Collect all writing samples and be sure that the teacher's box is complete on each.

THANK YOU for your assistance with this assignment. The completed writing essays will be picked up on April 7, 1989.

KNIGHT FOUNDATION PROJECT --Writing Sample III - April 4-6, 1989

Instructions

This is an activity to find out how well you write. You are asked to write an essay that explains something or presents an opinion on an issue. In preparing your essay, you should take the following steps:

1. Read carefully the directions and essay topic given below.
2. Plan your essay carefully before you write.
3. You may wish to use the attached scratch paper to make any notes.
4. Write your essay on the lined pages of the separate answer sheet.
5. Read carefully what you have written and make any changes that will improve your writing.
6. Check your paragraphs, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage; and make any necessary corrections.

You will have 45 minutes to write on the topic below. Write legibly and use a ballpoint pen. Write your essay on the lined pages of the separate answer sheet. The notes you make on scratch paper are for your use only.

YOUR ESSAY TOPIC:

Some people say that we live in a difficult time, with problems like high unemployment and the threat of war. But, in many ways, the period we live in is better than any other in history.

In what ways are our times both the best and worst of times? Write a composition of about 200 words explaining your answer to this question. Give reasons and specific examples to support your opinion.

To be completed by teacher:

Name of Teacher_____ Group *(check only one):* A____ P____ C____

To be completed by student:

Name_____ Class Period_____ Date_____
Last name, First name

WRITING SAMPLE III

Continue your essay on next page

USE A BALL POINT PEN TO WRITE YOUR ESSAY

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

The 1988 Tests of General Educational Development: **A Preview**

ged SM

The 1988 Tests of General Educational Development: **A Preview**

Prepared by the staff of the GED Testing Service

Douglas R. Whitney, Director
Wayne M. Patience, Senior Research Associate
Richard Swartz, Senior Test Editor
Joyce M. Downey, Social Studies Editor
Sandra L. Manigault, Mathematics Editor
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Suzette L. Stone, Staff Assistant

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How the GED Essay Is Scored

Holistic Scoring

Each paper written for the GED Writing Skills Test is scored by two trained readers. The readers score the papers "holistically;" that is, the piece of writing is evaluated on the basis of its *overall* effectiveness. The salient features of holistic scoring are well described by Conlan (1976):

> The basic assumptions of the holistic reading are that each of the factors involved in writing skill is related to all the others and that no one factor can be separated from the others. Readers must judge each essay as a whole; they must read each paper for the impression its totality makes. A misspelled word, a comma splice, a sentence fragment, a misplaced modifier should carry no great weight in scoring a paper. The candidate is entitled to make some mistakes: he or she is writing hurriedly in a tense situation, without recourse to a dictionary, without the customary time for deliberation. If readers read each paper as a whole, then, they are better able to judge the competence of the writer. If the paper is poorly written, that will be part of the reader's first impression; there is no need to analyze it word by word to decide that it is badly done. If the paper contains mistakes because the writer, though capable, has been forced to hurry, the reader will judge the general quality of the paper most effectively by reading it as a whole. The motto of the reading might well be "Read quickly and judge. Do not re-read."

The Six Point Scale

The score scale used by each reader in the holistic evaluations ranges from one (low) to six (high). The two readers' scores are then added, resulting in a range of scores from two to twelve. If the two readers' scores differ by more than one point, the paper is scored a third time. The total score for papers scored by three readers is twice the average of the three scores.

Because the six point scale is an even-numbered scale, there is no midpoint. The lack of a midpoint forces readers away from a natural tendency to drift towards the middle. With an even-numbered scale, readers must decide whether each paper belongs in the upper half or the lower half of the papers being scored. Readers can make this decision only if they have some awareness of the total range of writing ability represented by the papers; this is provided by sample papers in conjunction with a descriptive scoring guide.

How the Standards are Defined

The standards for an essay scoring session are defined by the GED essay scoring guide and by sample papers illustrating the different points on the scoring scale. These standards were originally established by examining papers written by a national sample of high school seniors and will be maintained by following the same process for each topic that is used in the GED Writing Skills Test. A group of highly experienced readers reads papers in the pool of high school essays to establish the range of abilities demonstrated by the norming population of (high school) students. After they have selected papers which represent the full range of ability, the readers assign the top score to the best of the papers, the lowest score to the weakest papers, and corresponding scores to other papers throughout the range. The readers' judgments during this process are made independently, and the papers that ultimately serve as samples include only those on which the readers' scores agree. These sample papers represent the full range of abilities demonstrated by a national sample of high school seniors and thus serve as standard setters, or "rangefinders."

The GED Essay Scoring Guide

The GED essay scoring guide is a further articulation of these standards and accompanies the rangefinders in training sessions. Because it was developed inductively, the scoring guide is descriptive rather than prescriptive. That is, after the readers selected the rangefinders, they attempted to describe, in general terms, the characteristics of papers at different points on the scoring scale. While the sample papers illustrate standards only for the specific topic on which they are written, the scoring guide defines the characteristics papers should exhibit regardless of the topic the paper is written on. Although there is ample research demonstrating that different topics exhibit different strengths and weaknesses of a writer, a generic guide can be used if topics are developed with the scoring guide in mind. All topics developed for use in the GED Tests are of the same rhetorical type and are of approximately equal length, reading level, and format. In addition, all potential topics are field tested and scored by trained readers, using the GED scoring guide to define standards. If readers find that papers written on a potential topic cannot be scored using the scoring guide, or that papers consistently exhibit traits other than those described in the guide, the topic is rejected. A further check on the match of topic to scoring guide is made through a statistical analysis wherein the mean and variance of examinee scores on potential topics

POINT	CHARACTERISTICS OF COMPOSITIONS
6	Noticeable for a distinctive approach or point of view. Tend to offer sophisticated ideas within a clear organizational framework appropriate for the topic. Supporting statements are particularly effective because of their specificity or illustrative quality. May suffer an occasional lapse in usage or mechanics, but primarily demonstrate fluency with language.
5	Clearly and effectively organized with sufficient support for major points. May go beyond the situation or context provided in the topic: display a maturity of thought. May lack the flair and grace of a 6 composition, but diction and surface features are consistently under control, despite an occasional usage error.
4	Show evidence of an organizational plan, though the support tends to be less extensive or less convincing than that in 5 or 6 compositions. Observe conventions of accepted usage—some errors, but not severe enough to interfere significantly with the main purpose.
3	Lack the planning or development apparent in 4 compositions. If organized, rely on simplistic listing or haphazard recitation of ideas. Ineffective in accomplishing their purpose. Demonstrate repeated weaknesses in usage.
2	Have marked lack of development or inadequate support for ideas. Frequently show unsophisticated or superficial level of thought; often have listing of unsupported generalizations. Rather than a clear purpose, present conflicting purposes. Usage errors seriously interfere with overall effectiveness.
1	Clearly demonstrate lack of control. Have no clear plan. Do not adhere to usage conventions. Purpose is not apparent and, therefore, not accomplished.

must approximate the mean and variance of the anchor topic for which the scoring guide was written.

Training of Readers

While the specific procedures for training readers and conducting the essay scoring session depend upon the number of papers to be scored and the number of readers participating, many of the basic principles remain the same regardless of the size of the effort. Readers are usually trained prior to or at the beginning of the essay scoring session. After an introduction to the principles of holistic scoring provided by a chief reader, readers are given the topic, the scoring guide, and the rangefinders, which include at least one paper at each point on the score scale. After a discussion of the tasks required by the topic and a review of the qualities enumerated on the scoring guide, readers are asked to read the entire set of rangefinders, evaluating them swiftly on the basis of an overall impression and ranking them from best to poorest. Because the set of rangefinders includes more papers than there are points on the score scale (i.e., 8 papers for a six point scale), readers are instructed that they must use the entire range of scores. This is an important instruction in the training because many readers are reluctant to award scores at the top or at the bottom of the score scale. If readers are directed to give the top score to the best paper in the set of rangefinders, they are more likely to acknowledge that a "6" paper does not—and need not—represent perfection.

In a large group training session, the chief reader calls for a show of hands to indicate how readers scored the rangefinders. Ideally, all of the readers will have scored each of the rangefinders identically. In some readings, involving highly experienced readers, this ideal is realized. However, with inexperienced readers there are often substantial differences among readers' scores at this point. To help resolve those differences, readers designated as "table leaders" conduct discussions among the four to six readers at their tables to attempt to bring each individual to a point of consensus with the group. At the heart of the holistic scoring process is the necessity for each reader to be willing to accept—and in some cases consciously shift to—the standards defined in the scoring guide and adopted by the group. Following the discussion of the rangefinders, additional work is done towards this goal through the scoring of more sample papers, distributed singly or in sets of two or three. The scoring and discussion of sample papers continues until the entire group of readers begins to show a consensus in their scoring. At this point, the training period ends and the actual scoring of essays begins, although table leaders may continue to work with individual readers if necessary.

Reliability and Stability

The goals of an essay scoring session are inter-rater reliability and reading "stability." Inter-rater reliability is the degree to which readers agree with each other; generally, the fewer papers which require a third reading, the greater the inter-rater reliability, though this index is affected by other variables as well. Reading stability is the degree to which papers are scored according to the fixed standards described in the scoring guide. This is a particularly important feature of an essay scoring session because the standards for scoring GED essays must remain fixed, regardless of when the essay is administered, where it is scored, or what specific procedures were used in the scoring session itself. It is important to note that a high degree of inter-rater reliability does not ensure reading stability. In short, just because readers are agreeing with each other on essay scores does not mean that they are assigning the scores according to the standards defined on the scoring guide.

To achieve these two goals, the reinforcement of scoring standards continues well after the initial training session is over. As the readers score papers, a table leader (in a large reading) or chief reader (in a small reading) selects scored papers at random to verify that the scoring is consistent with the definitions in the scoring guide. In cases of a disagreement, the chief reader or table leader discusses the paper with the reader. The monitoring process continues throughout the entire scoring session, and, in large readings, the chief reader periodically reviews the scoring of the table leaders.

When scoring large numbers of papers, readers generally read for periods from 30 to 45 minutes at a time and then take breaks. At the beginning of each reading period, additional sample papers are distributed and scored as an additional check on reader accuracy. Generally, readers score between 30 and 50 papers per hour, depending on various factors such as the reader's experience, the length of the papers, and the time of day. Readers are encouraged to read swiftly because a slow, deliberate reading of a paper tends towards analytical, rather than holistic, evaluation of writing. But readers are frequently reminded that accuracy is far more important than speed. Through this system of checks and re-checks, some assurance is gained that all readers are scoring according to the standards defined by the scoring guide and not according to one defined by each individual.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Betty Castor
Commissioner of Education

January 18, 1989

Dr. Barbara Palmer, Professor
Department of Childhood Education
Florida State University
115 Stone Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32306

Dear Dr. Palmer:

The GED Essay Scoring Center has completed the scoring of approximately nine hundred essays for the Project, "Newspaper in Education," that is being conducted in Leon County.

The enclosed essays have been scored in accordance to the provisions required for state-administered GED Testing programs, i.e., holistically, computer processed, and graded without bias. If you should have any technical questions regarding the procedures and/or scoring of any of the essays, please contact Mr. Bob Potsko at 488-8201.

We appreciate this opportunity to be of assistance. Should you need further help regarding the GED Testing Program and Essay Scoring Center, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Leatricia Williams, Program Director.

Sincerely,

John E. Lawrence

John E. Lawrence, Chief
Bureau of Adult and
Community Education

lwt

enclosure

cc: Ms. Leatricia Williams
Mr. Bob Potsko

Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Affirmative action, equal opportunity employer

The Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-4065

College of Education
Department of Childhood Education
Reading and Language Arts
115 Stone Bldg.
(904) 644-5458

February 27, 1989

Mr. John E. Lawrence, Chief
Bureau of Adult and Community Education
Florida Department of Education
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Mr. Lawrence:

It is with much gratitude that I thank you and your staff at the GED Essay Scoring Center for the diligent work applied to the holistic scoring of the first set of writing samples for the Knight Foundation NEWSPAPER IN EDUCATION Project currently being conducted in Leon County. We realize and appreciate the tremendous contribution that the scoring of more than nine hundred essays represents.

Without the stellar support of dedicated educators providing leadership and services such as you have, the high quality of this interagency research project would not have been achieved. We are grateful for your steadfast support and look forward to working with you throughout the remainder of the project.

Sincerely,

Barbara C. Palmer

Barbara C. Palmer, Principal Investigator
Knight Foundation Project

BCP:mh

cc: Ms. Leatricia Williams
Mr. Bob Potsko

Appendix G

Reading Vocabulary, Reading Comprehension, and Writing Performance Pretest and Posttest Scores by Group

Tables G-1 through G-6 show reading vocabulary and reading comprehension pretest and posttest scores and writing performance scores for samples 1 and 3 at the middle and secondary school levels by group. Due to the large number of students who did not complete the study and because of absenteeism, 3 separate subsamples are presented.

Total sample represents every student who took either the pretest or the posttest.

Pre- and posttest only or writing sample 1 and 3 only represents only those students who took both the pretest and the posttest (reading vocabulary and reading comprehension) or writing sample 1 and writing sample 3 (writing performance).

Pre- or posttest only or writing sample 1 or 3 only represents only those students who took just the pretest or just the posttest (reading vocabulary and reading comprehension) or just writing sample 1 or writing sample 3 (writing performance).

The tables show means, standard deviations, and sample sizes for each of the active, passive, and control groups. Though some differences are large, there does not appear to be any systematic pattern that might identify potential dropouts or chronic absentees.

Table G-1

Middle School Reading Vocabulary Pretest and Posttest Scores by Group

	Total Sample						Pre- and Posttest Only				Pre- or Posttest Only			
	Pretest			Posttest			Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Active	32.0	6.0	127	34.3	4.3	93	32.6	5.2	34.5	4.2	30.6	7.4	30.0	3.0
							90		90		37		3	
Passive	30.8	6.1	107	31.7	5.6	76	30.8	5.7	32.2	5.2	30.8	6.9	22.5	4.3
							72		72		35		4	
Control	29.5	5.8	85	31.0	5.6	65	29.8	5.5	31.0	5.7	28.9	6.5	31.5	4.6
							59		59		26		6	

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Table G-2

Middle School Reading Comprehension Pretest and Posttest Scores by Group

	Total Sample						Pre- and Posttest Only						Pre- or Posttest Only					
	Pretest			Posttest			Pretest			Posttest			Pretest			Posttest		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Active	38.8	8.5	125	41.0	5.5	89	39.0	8.5	86	40.9	5.6	86	38.3	8.6	39	41.7	3.1	3
Passive	37.1	8.2	104	38.7	7.5	74	37.7	8.0	71	38.9	7.4	71	35.9	8.6	33	35.0	9.5	3
Control	35.9	9.1	78	36.6	8.0	64	36.3	9.2	53	36.1	8.5	53	35.2	8.9	25	39.4	4.6	11

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Table G-3

Middle School Writing Performance Scores for Samples 1 and 3 by Group

	Total Sample						1 and 3 Only						1 or 3 Only					
	writing sample 1			writing sample 3			writing sample 1			writing sample 3			writing sample 1			writing sample 3		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Active	4.62	1.12	116	5.26	.98	91	4.70	.96	86	5.26	.96	86	4.40	1.48	30	5.40	1.34	5
Passive	4.52	1.29	97	4.66	1.06	74	4.76	1.20	66	4.76	.99	66	4.00	1.34	31	3.88	1.36	8
Control	4.45	1.17	71	4.38	1.02	66	4.46	1.15	52	4.46	1.09	52	4.42	1.26	19	4.07	.62	14

Table G-4

Secondary Level Reading Vocabulary Pretest and Posttest Scores by Group

	Total Sample						Pre- and Posttest Only				Pre- or Posttest Only			
	Pretest			Posttest			Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Active	22.7	8.8	145	23.6	7.9	93	21.7	8.8	23.6	7.8	24.3	8.6	23.5	9.8
							87		87		58		6	
Passive	24.9	7.9	215	25.8	7.9	109	24.2	8.3	25.7	7.8	25.5	7.5	31.0	11.3
							106		106		109		3	
Control	23.4	9.2	107	23.9	9.1	65	23.8	9.4	23.6	9.2	23.0	9.1	27.0	7.9
							59		59		48		6	

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Table G- 5

Secondary Level Reading Comprehension Pretest and Posttest Scores by Group

	Total Sample						Pre- and Posttest Only				Pre- or Posttest Only			
	Pretest			Posttest			Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Active	23.4	9.9	147	26.3	9.6	94	22.8	9.3	26.2	9.6	24.3	10.7	29.3	9.4
							91		91		56		3	
Passive	28.2	9.6	199	28.9	9.8	104	28.1	9.6	29.4	9.8	28.3	9.7	22.4	8.3
							97		97		102		7	
Control	25.2	10.9	104	22.5	10.8	60	26.1	11.0	22.1	10.8	24.2	10.9	25.5	10.9
							54		54		50		6	

Table G-6

Secondary School Writing Performance Scores for Samples 1 and 3 by Group

	Total Sample						1 and 3 Only						1 or 3 Only					
	writing sample 1			writing sample 3			writing sample 1			writing sample 3			writing sample 1			writing sample 3		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Active	4.12	1.39	138	4.49	1.12	75	4.20	1.39	70	4.60	1.06	70	4.03	1.40	68	3.00	1.00	5
Passive	4.31	1.38	177	4.46	1.26	127	4.27	1.30	117	4.53	1.28	117	4.38	1.53	60	3.70	.67	10
Control	4.29	1.28	101	4.39	1.15	56	4.36	1.35	50	4.26	1.14	50	4.22	1.21	51	5.50	.55	6

Appendix H

Bilingualism

The student questionnaire asked for responses to the following questions: Do you speak a language other than English? If "yes," what language other than English? Which language do you speak better? These questions were answered by 205 middle school students with pre- and posttests in vocabulary. In response to the question as to whether or not a second language was spoken, 11 answered yes; 194 answered no. Spanish was given as the second language choice for 10 of the 11 bilingual students. All 11 reported their better language was English.

On the student questionnaire, the question as to whether or not the student was bilingual was answered by 196 middle school students who took both pre- and posttests in reading comprehension; 12 answered yes, 184 answered no. Spanish was the second language choice of 11 of the 12 bilingual students; all 12 stated that their better language was English.

Secondary school students who took both pre- and posttests in vocabulary and answered the student questionnaire item regarding bilingualism totaled 241. Of that number, 35 indicated they were bilingual; 206 indicated that they were not bilingual. In responding

to the question asking what other language they spoke, 29 of the 35 bilingual students responded; 20 of the 29 were bilingual in Spanish. All but 4 students reported their better language to be English.

On the student questionnaire, the question as to whether or not the student was bilingual was answered by 221 secondary school students who took both pre- and posttests in reading comprehension; 34 answered yes, 187 answered no. Spanish was the second language choice of 20 of 29 students who answered that question; all but 4 indicated that their better language was English.

Appendix I

Reasons for not Completing Study

by Groups and by Gender

Table I-1

Middle School Student Reasons for Not Completing Study by Group and by Gender

Reason for Leaving School	Active		Passive		Control	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Changed schools	3 / 5.3	4 / 5.3	3 / 5.9	2 / 3.2	3 / 6.3	4 / 8.5
Changed sections/classes	6 / 10.5	6 / 8.0	7 / 13.7	5 / 8.1	3 / 6.3	/
Special programs: Alpha; Department of Corrections, TAP	1 / 1.8	1 / 1.3	1 / 2.0	3 / 4.8	/	/
Demoted to 7th grade	/	/	1 / 2.0	/	/	/
Juvenile detention	2 / 3.5	/	/	/	/	/
Dropped out/withdrawn	/	/	/	/	4 / 8.3	2 / 4.3
Chronic absentee or suspension	1 / 1.8	2 / 2.7	/	1 / 1.6	/	3 / 6.4
Unknown	/	4 / 5.3	1 / 2.0	4 / 6.4	1 / 2.1	/
Beginning Totals	57	75	51	62	48	47
Number lost	13	17	13	15	11	9
Percentage lost	22.8	22.7	25.5	24.2	22.9	19.1

Upper triangle = count
Lower triangle = percentage

Total beginning number = 340: 132 active; 113 passive; 95 control.

Table I-2

Secondary School Student Reasons for Not Completing Study by Group and by Gender

Reason for Leaving School	Active		Passive		Control	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Changed schools	5 / 5.7	7 / 9.6	4 / 3.0	6 / 6.3	5 / 6.8	2 / 3.8
Changed sections/classes	5 / 5.7	5 / 6.8	4 / 3.0	3 / 3.1	4 / 5.5	11 / 20.8
Dropped out/ Quit or withdrew	7 / 8.0	5 / 6.8	12 / 9.0	10 / 10.4	4 / 5.5	5 / 9.4
Chronic absentee	1 / 1.1	1 / 1.4	1 / .08	2 / 2.1	/	/
Special programs: Project Success, TAP, substance abuse rehabilitation	/	2 / 2.7	2 / 1.5	6 / 6.3	/	1 / 1.9
Sickness	1 / 1.1	1 / 1.4	/	/	/	/
GED (General Educational Development)	/	1 / 1.4	1 / 0.8	/	/	/
Home school	/	1 / 1.4	/	1 / 1.0	/	/
Lively Vocational/Technical	/	1 / 1.4	4 / 3.0	1 / 1.0	1 / 1.4	2 / 3.8
Unknown	3 / 3.4	3 / 4.1	3 / 2.3	4 / 3.1	2 / 2.7	/
Parents arrested; placed in home by HRS	/	1 / 1.4	/	/	/	/
Beginning totals	88	73	133	96	73	53
Number lost	22	28	31	33	16	21
Percentage lost	25.0	38.3	23.3	34.4	21.9	39.6

Upper triangle = count
Lower triangle = percentage

Total beginning number = 516: 161 active, 229 passive, 126 control

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